

Rolling Stone

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SPECIAL REPORT

**The Koch
Brothers
Battle Solar
Energy**

**The
Revenant's
Dark
Genius**

**A Beach Boy
Looks Back
in Anger**

**Black
Sabbath's
Last Ride**

**Chris
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RS 1255

"All the
News
That Fits"

Mike Love
(center, left)
with the Beach
Boys in 1966.
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MUSIC

RICK RUBIN: MY LIFE IN 20 SONGS

The Def Jam co-founder reflects on more than 30 years of producing classic records, from the Beastie Boys' *Licensed to Ill* and LL Cool J's *Radio* to the Red Hot Chili Peppers' *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* to the Dixie Chicks' *Take the Long Way* to Kanye West's *Yeezus*. "There's a time to strip back an artist's sound," Rubin says, "but sometimes it makes sense to do the exact opposite."



EXCLUSIVE

STORY OF THE REPLACEMENTS

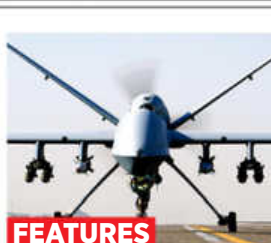
Read an exclusive excerpt from *Trouble Boys: The True Story of the Replacements*, about the group's notoriously drunken appearance on *Saturday Night Live* in 1986.



FILM

INDIE HORROR: 'THE WITCH'

How a Brooklyn theater director took a story about 17th-century Puritans and turned it into the scariest movie of the year, despite a tiny budget and a cast of unknowns.



FEATURES

THE DRONE REBELLION

An exclusive feature about drone operators who wrote an open letter to President Obama detailing how the program creates more enemy combatants than it kills.



360 DEGREES OF COUNTRY!

Come to Rolling Stone Country for daily news, video and reviews on Nashville and beyond. We talk to Vince Gill about his new album and the preservation of traditional country music. Powered by Ram.

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The Playlist

OUR FAVORITE SONGS, ALBUMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW

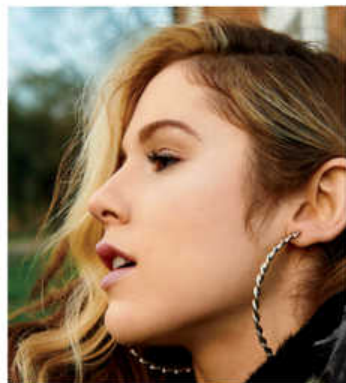


1. Elliott Smith "True Love"

Twelve-plus years after Smith's death, there are still some serious gems in his catalog that most fans have never heard. This ballad about the tragic allure of addiction – recorded in 2001 with producer Jon Brion but unreleased until now, on the soundtrack of the new documentary *Heaven Adores You* – is one of the best.

4. White Denim "Holda You (I'm Psycho)"

The Austin psychedelic-rock crew jam out like the last true heirs of the Allman Brothers on this single from their new album, *Stiff*. Eat a peach and turn it up loud.



5. Katy B "Honey"

She's a big deal in the U.K., but American audiences haven't quite signed up for Katy B's club-pop movement yet. Here's hoping her next album – preceded by this bright, fun, forward-thinking groove of a single – will be the one to change that.

2. Rostam "Wood"

We were sorry to see Vampire Weekend co-founder Rostam Batmanglij leave the group in late January – but this lush, dreamy love song, which he reposted immediately after the announcement, has us excited for the music he'll make from here.

3. Drake "Summer Sixteen"

Drake side-eyes Kanye's pool ("Mine is just bigger") and snaps back at President Obama for saying he prefers Kendrick's music. Please, Drizzy, don't hurt 'em!



6. Elton John "In the Name of You"

We love Elton in somber piano-ballad mode, but nothing compares to when he's in a dancing mood. This uptempo pop romp from his great new album, *Wonderful Crazy Night*, is exactly what we mean.

7. Rihanna "Same Ol' Mistakes"

Tame Impala's *Currents* was one of our favorite LPs of 2015 – and clearly, Rihanna agreed! Her cover of the Aussie act is a killer curveball. It feels like that trippy robot-funk bass line was waiting for her blissed-out vocals all along.

MY LIST



Peter Wolf

Five Songs to Cure Loneliness

"Dwelling in the world of sad songs is my antidote for loneliness," says Wolf, whose new solo album, *A Cure for Loneliness*, will be released on April 8th.

Nolan Strong and the Diablos "The Wind"

This song has a great cult following, especially with doo-wop fans. Even just the intro has the power to bring you back to the sadness of a lost love.

Dorothy Moore "Misty Blue"

This started out as a country song but became an R&B tour de force. Every time I hear it, it transports me into a state of misty blue.

The Platters "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"

This came from the 1933 production of *Roberta*, starring Bob Hope. When the Platters recorded it, they ended up owning it.

Little Walter "Blue and Lonesome"

Little Walter did for the harmonica what Jimi Hendrix did for the guitar. He took it to another place.

Hank Williams "On Top of Old Smokey"

You can't go wrong hanging around with Hank. His version of this song is sadness and loss personified.

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Correspondence

Love Letters
& Advice



Leo's Big Year

COMPELLING COVER STORY on Leonardo DiCaprio ["Leo's Crusade," RS 1253]. It appears that many of Hollywood's biggest stars feel that acting isn't interesting enough to fully sustain them. But this year, it's clearly Oscar-contender DiCaprio's time to shine.

John Pierce, via the Internet

IT'S GRATIFYING WHEN Hollywood superstars of DiCaprio's caliber have a genuinely global vision. The more that high-profile artists commit to issues like climate change, the less likely it is that Americans will view their crucial work as a sort of vanity project. Good for DiCaprio. And good on Stephen Rodrick for writing a very engaging profile.

*Bethany Armstrong
Via the Internet*

ALTHOUGH I'M SURE LEO has the best of intentions, until he stops riding on yachts and flying around in private jets, he has no right to put himself forth as an environmentalist, no matter which electric car he drives. Do as I say, not as I do, right?

Tara Murray, Cherry Hill, NJ

NOW WE KNOW WHAT'S EATING Gilbert Grape: climate change. The movement needs all the star power it can get.

Kate McDonald, via the Internet

Penn and the Kingpin

In RS 1253, actor and director Sean Penn wrote about his secret trip to Mexico to interview notorious drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán – then on the lam from Mexican authorities – about the drug war ["El Chapo Speaks"]. As we were going to press, Mexican military recaptured Guzmán in his home state of Sinaloa. ROLLING STONE readers wrote in.

I JUST FINISHED READING Sean Penn's article on El Chapo, and I have a newfound respect for him. I can't imagine the guts it took to get this story. My hat's off to Penn and ROLLING STONE for bringing us this piece.

*David Lambing
Henderson, NV*

PENN'S SELF-IMPORTANT and overly adjectived story about meeting El Chapo was akin to an adolescent's long-awaited, top-secret encounter with a criminal who makes Al Capone look like a Boy Scout by comparison. We all might be better served if Penn used his celebrity to engage American policymakers in realistic discussions about our country's illicit-drug-abuse issues.

*Carol Falkowski
St. Paul, MN*

PENN'S WILLINGNESS TO risk his own life to get the

story of a lifetime illustrates true grit.

*JoAnn Lee Frank
Clearwater, FL*

IF PENN WAS REALLY INTERESTED in drug issues, he would promote movies that correctly portray Joaquín Guzmán's trafficking organization for what it is: a criminal empire created through addiction, misery and death.

*G.W. O'Hara
Cleveland*



THE "EL CHAPO" PIECE was riveting work. Who knew that Sean Penn would be such an astute gonzo journalist?

Joseph Luigi, Bronx

Climate Victory

JEFF GOODELL WRITES OPTIMISTICALLY about the landmark agreement signed at the U.N. climate conference in France ["Will Paris Save the World?" RS 1253]. I was struck by how close delegates came to walking away from the table. Here's hoping that this is the first step in capping the world's deadly carbon emissions.

*Patrick Rivington
Via the Internet*

THE PLANET HAS REACHED the point of no return and is warming beyond our ability to control it. The climate agreement is not strong enough and does little except fill people with self-satisfaction.

Anne Godfrey, via the Internet

TWO BIG STORIES IN THE current issue are about climate change, but neither mentions vegetarianism as a way to protect the environment. The meat industry is a major cause of

greenhouse gases that lead to global warming.

*Kristy McMahan
Phoenix City, AL*

Lemmy Forever

I'VE BEEN A SUBSCRIBER FOR nearly 30 years, and I have never been this pissed off about the cover. The music world just lost one of rock's most influential artists [Tribute, RS 1253]: Without Lemmy Kilmister, there would be no Metallica, Nirvana, Guns n' Roses, Pretenders or Black Flag, among other bands. Leo is great, but Lemmy is God!

Charles Sorensen, Salt Lake City

Pilots' Punk Pop

TWENTY ONE PILOTS DRAW inspiration from all over ["The Flight of Twenty One Pilots," RS 1253]. That Tyler Joseph is going to stop stressing and apologizing for it? Good.

Pam Cohen, via the Internet

THE HAPPY CHRISTIAN ending with Josh Dun's parents fell flat. What if Dun had turned out gay or *did* experiment with drugs? Growing up with Christian parents isn't always quite so warm and fuzzy, trust me.

Gary Watson, Astoria, OR

Badu Renaissance

COOL STORY ON MUSIC'S most unapologetic original ["Erykah Badu: Born Again," RS 1253]. Her "Hotline Bling" tops Drake's, and her "Hello" with Andre 3000 beats Rundgren's and Adele's hands down.

Xavier Cole, via the Internet

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11.22.63

When you fight the past,
the past fights back.

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Rock Roll

Ozzy in
Chicago
last month

Black Sabbath's Last Ride

On the road with Ozzy and Co. as
the band kicks off its final tour ever

BY KORY GROW

WELCOME TO THE END," OZZY OSBOURNE says to 20,000 fans at Chicago's United Center. He's dressed head-to-toe in black, and his band has just wrung every ounce of Gothic gloom from its opening dirge, "Black Sabbath," but now Ozzy sounds more wistful than scary. "Can you believe it, man? From 1968 till now."

Nearly half a century after they first scared the bejesus out of rock fans, Black Sabbath have begun their

victory lap. The End, a big, fiery farewell tour for some of rock's most primal visionaries, includes two North American legs – the current one runs through late February, and another kicks off in August – and could stretch at least into next year, band members say.

Osbourne says the idea to call it quits “just kind of happened” – a mutual decision among him, guitarist Tony Iommi and bassist Geezer Butler. By ending now, Black Sabbath are saying goodbye before overstaying their welcome. “I don’t want to drag it into the dirt,” Osbourne says. “The best thing that happened to Sabbath the first time was we went our own ways for a while [in 1979]. It was good for them and good for me.” Osbourne is sure the decision is final. “You could put that money on it,” he says.

“It’ll be bittersweet,” says Butler, looking ahead to the eventual last show. “I’m glad we’re finishing on a high note but sad that it’s the end of what I’ve known for most of my life.”

The scene in Chicago, however, is more like a celebration than a funeral. The audience trades verses with Osbourne during “War Pigs” and headbangs on live rarities like “After Forever” and “Hand of Doom.” The band seems as care-free as the crowd.

Iommi nimbly refigures some of his guitar leads into outré blues experiments, and Butler toys with a wah-wah during his solo break before “N.I.B.,” giving the concert an air of unpredictability. Most surprising: The band is all smiles throughout the show. “We love you all,” Osbourne tells the crowd.

As has been much reported, one key part of the Sabbath story is absent from the party. Drummer Bill Ward split from the group shortly after the bandmates announced they would reunite in 2011 for their first new album with the original lineup in 33 years; he claimed they did not offer him a “signable contract.” He has feuded publicly with his former bandmates in the years since, after Osbourne described him as “incredibly overweight” and unfit to tour.

The group enlisted Tommy Clufetos, who plays in Osbourne’s solo band, to drum on tour. Ward tells *ROLLING STONE* in a statement that he and his manage-

ment reached out to Sabbath’s managerial team with an offer to return to the band for the End tour. “We were told there was no interest,” Ward says.

Butler, for his part, claims neutrality, or at least ignorance. “We still get on great,” he says of his relationship with the drummer. “We still can talk to each other. It’s just that I have no idea what went on

Before the tour, the band batted around the idea of recording a follow-up to *13*, with Iommi reporting that he had “a whole load” of riffs at the ready. But Butler says he had put the kibosh on the idea. “I was just being logical,” the bassist says. “At the time, we were given six months to write and record an album, and I said, ‘There’s absolutely no way.’” He laughs. By his estimation, the last LP took three years to make. “We’ll probably all be dead by then,” he says dryly.

Instead of making a new record, the band is selling a limited-edition tour-only CD, titled *The End*, on the road. It contains four outtakes from the *13* sessions, which range in tone from the trudging, tumultuous “Season of the Dead” to the murky, bluesy “Isolated Man,” as well as four live recordings. After the End tour, they’ll decide whether Black Sabbath will ever hit the studio again.

“Time ain’t on our side,” says Osbourne, 67. “To be honest with you, if the new record wasn’t another Number One, we would have been pissed off, so we just left it on a high note with *13*. I’m not saying I’ll never record with Tony or Geezer again. I just don’t want to tour with Black Sabbath after this.”

Life on the road these days couldn’t be more different from their initial run in the 1970s. The band is taking regular breaks so that Iommi can have his blood tested, and Osbourne is looking out for his

health as well. He’s three years sober and does an hour of cardio a day. Butler, a lifetime vegetarian, has become vegan. It’s a stark contrast to the band’s heavy-partying days, when its drug and alcohol intake was the stuff of legend. “We’re not killing ourselves [anymore],” Osbourne says. “It doesn’t get any easier physically. I don’t know how the fucking Stones do it.”

“Now we have private planes and the best suites in the best hotels, but the downside is there’s no drugs and no women,” Butler says with a laugh. “You come offstage and have a cup of tea and go to bed.”

“I was the fucking rebel for so many years,” says Osbourne. “Now I can’t understand why I was going out, getting full of Jack Daniel’s, having a bag of white powder and talking shit till daybreak, thinking that was fun. I would poke my fucking eyes out if I had to do that now.”



IRON MEN Iommi (with Ozzy, above) was diagnosed with lymphoma in 2012 but lately appears healthy. Left: Butler in January.

in the background. I don’t know who to believe, and I don’t really delve into it.”

“I’d rather not talk about it, actually,” Osbourne says. “As soon as I start talking about Bill Ward, I get about 500 fucking slaggings in the post.”

After deciding to move ahead without Ward, Sabbath faced another, more serious crisis. In 2012, Iommi revealed he had been diagnosed with lymphoma. Still, he dedicated himself to writing the band’s 19th studio release, *13*, which debuted at Number One on the U.S. chart in 2013. “I thought the last tour was going to be the end,” Butler says of Sabbath’s 2014 run. “This time, we thought, ‘Well, we got one more tour left in us – let’s go out and do it while we can.’” Iommi’s outlook is looking up, according to Butler. “I think the cancer has sort of at least gone away, for now, anyway,” he says.

Paul Kantner, 1941-2016

The Jefferson Airplane singer-guitarist was full of missionary fervor and 'mad, epic' ideas

BY DAVID FRICKE

AT THE HEIGHT OF SAN Francisco's mid-Sixties psychedelic renaissance, Jefferson Airplane, the scene's reigning band, often played free shows for the faithful – on flatbed trucks in the Panhandle and at be-ins in Golden Gate Park. That is where bassist Jack Casady saw his bandmate, singer-guitarist Paul Kantner, “at his best. He’d take his 12-string Rickenbacker,” Casady says, “and raise it above his head in a great, revolutionary stance. He loved that phenomenon of a huge number of people coming together with music as the foundation and the catalyst.”

Kantner – who died at 74 on January 28th in San Francisco of multiple organ failure following a heart attack earlier in the week – pursued that ideal for more than 50 years: first with the Airplane, which he co-founded with singer Marty Balin in 1965; then, after that group broke up, in the spinoff Kantner dubbed Jefferson Starship and led through multiple lineups until his passing. “Paul was a zealot,” says Airplane lead guitarist Jorma Kaukonen, who “never lost that dream” of a community charged by rock & roll, bonded by joyous rebellion and destined for a utopian future. Kantner put it this way in a 1970 *ROLLING STONE* interview: “We seek to eradicate that audience-performer relationship as much as possible. That’s not really valid anymore.”

With his martial-folk style of rhythm guitar, urgent, grainy singing and complex, stridently topical songwriting, Kantner was “the Pete Seeger of the band,” Kaukonen claims. “The social distress of the time was the perfect storm for Paul’s kind of writing.” Kantner’s Airplane classics – including “Crown of Creation,” “We Can Be Together” and “Wooden Ships,” the last co-written with David Crosby and Stephen Stills – were turbulent, melodically eccentric anthems propelled with lysergic-blues force by Kaukonen, Casady and drummer Spencer Dryden, and fired skyward by Kantner’s empathic vocal ballet with Balin and acid-rock siren Grace Slick.

Kantner’s missionary fervor was a major reason why the Airplane splintered at the end of the Sixties into side projects like Casady and Kaukonen’s blues

duo, Hot Tuna, and Kantner’s own 1970 science-fiction concept album, *Blows Against the Empire*. “Paul couldn’t do anybody else’s music,” claims Balin, who quit Jefferson Airplane in 1971 but frequently reunited with Kantner for records and tours over the next several decades. “In the beginning, Paul wrote some beautiful love songs,” like the plaintive, jangly “Let Me In,” on the 1966 debut, *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*. “But as he went on, his songs became these epics. That became our style. That’s why the Airplane broke apart. We had to get away from just doing what Paul could do.”

“Paul was a lot like me – opinionated, confident and not very afraid of anything,” confirms Crosby, a lifelong friend. “But Paul wasn’t trying to convince you that you had to do it his way. He did think that leading by example was the right thing.” And Kantner led best, Crosby says, through music. “He was a believer in music as a lifting force. It lifts humanity up, makes it better.”

Paul Lorin Kantner was born in San Francisco on March 17th, 1941. His father, also named Paul, was a salesman; Kantner’s mother, Cora, died when he was eight. Kantner attended a Catholic boarding school in Berkeley – “A little more vulgar version of the Jesuits,” as he put it in Ralph J. Gleason’s 1969 book *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound* – and had dropped out of the University of Santa Clara when he met Kaukonen, a new student there, in 1962. “He still had that collegiate look to him,” Kaukonen recalls. “But Paul was definitely existing outside the pale” – living in a surfer’s shack and profoundly influenced by *Stranger in a Strange Land*, Robert Heinlein’s 1961 novel about the spiritual journey of a human raised by Martians.

“The idealism in Heinlein infected him in the same way it infected me,” says Crosby, who met Kantner in 1963 when they were both aspiring folk singers living in a communal household in Venice, California. Something else the two men shared:



Kantner
in 1967

"He was, as I was then, a stoner," Crosby says, laughing. "We became good friends."

One evening in 1965, Kantner – back in San Francisco – walked into a folk club called the Drinking Gourd, carrying a 12-string guitar and a banjo. "He had his hair down to here and an old cap," Balin, who was there, told Gleason in that 1969 book. "I had never heard of him, but I knew he was good." On August 13th, 1965, Balin, Kantner and their embryonic Airplane – with Kaukonen and original female vocalist Signe Toly Anderson – made their live debut as the opening attraction at Balin's new club, the Matrix. "I had to encourage him to sing," Balin says of Kantner now. "He

members Kantner as determined "to the point of being obnoxious in rehearsals, especially with his songs. He knew what he wanted out of them, and he would hammer us until he got it."

In 1980, as an increasingly commercial version of Jefferson Starship was riding its own wave of success, Kantner suffered and survived a cerebral hemorrhage. He was more distressed by his eroding role in the Jefferson Starship's direction, quitting in 1984 and legally forcing the other members of the band to cut their name to Starship. After recording a 1989 reunion album with most of the classic-line-up Airplane, Kantner relaunched Jefferson

Starship according to his original science-fiction-protest vision, touring extensively and writing and releasing a 2008 album, *Jefferson's Tree of Liberty*, on which he covered traditional and political folk songs by Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Woody Guthrie and others. "He was like an American David Bowie," says Balin. "He had these mad, epic ideas."

Kantner never stopped trying to regenerate the revolutionary nirvana of the Airplane's golden age – and get his old bandmates back onstage and to record with him. "Over the years, Paul would always be like, 'We gotta do this, we gotta do that,'" says

Kaukonen, who runs a guitar-instruction camp in southeastern Ohio and still works with Casady in Hot Tuna. "And I'd say, 'No, I'm doing this.'"

Last year, Balin turned down an offer to join Kantner on a tour celebrating the Airplane's 50th anniversary. "Paul sent me a schedule that was ridiculous," Balin says, "every country, every night. I said, 'Paul, you gotta watch out for your health.'" Kantner, a lifelong smoker and drinker, replied, "I can do that. Nothing can hurt me. I'm as strong as a bull."

"He did not have subtlety," Crosby says of Kantner. "He had a very forthright approach. He didn't do tender ballads. He liked songs where he could sing out strong, in full voice. He was always the toughest of us. You thought nothing could kill him."

"Paul's thing was always 'There is music left to be made,'" Kaukonen remembers. "And he might have been right. We will never know now."

Anderson in San Francisco, 1966



The Singer Who Helped Jefferson Airplane Take Off

Remembering Signe Anderson, the band's unsung first vocalist

On October 15th, 1966, Signe Toly Anderson, the original female vocalist in Jefferson Airplane, gave her last performance with the group at the Fillmore Auditorium. Married and raising her first child, she was leaving after appearing on their 1966 debut LP, *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*. On October 16th, at the Fillmore, the Airplane introduced her replacement – Grace Slick, who quickly overshadowed Anderson by singing on the 1967 hits "Somebody to Love" and "White Rabbit."

Anderson was eclipsed again when she died at 74 on January 28th – the same day as Airplane singer-guitarist Paul Kantner. News of her death in Oregon did not emerge until January 30th. Anderson suffered from pulmonary disease and had survived a bout with cancer. Airplane singer Marty Balin recalled performing at a benefit for Anderson in the Nineties.

Born Signe Toly in Seattle and raised in Portland, Oregon, Anderson was a folk and jazz singer living in San Francisco when, in the summer of 1965, Balin saw her perform at the Drinking Gourd and asked her to join the fledgling Airplane. Described by guitarist Jorma Kaukonen as "a real sweetheart with a terrific contralto voice," Anderson was a hearty component in the Airplane's vocal blend, particularly effective on the band's early folk and blues material. Her featured number on *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off* was the Memphis Minnie cover "Chauffeur Blues."

After quitting Jefferson Airplane, Anderson returned to Portland, where she sang in a local big band. She also performed guest spots with Jefferson Starship and Hot Tuna. Her final Airplane show was issued on CD in 2011. It features a showstopping version of "Chauffeur Blues."

DAVID FRICKE



Above: Kantner with Slick in 1967. The couple had a daughter, China, in 1971. Right: Kantner in 2011.



was a little shy about it at first. But he got into it."

It was at the Matrix that Kantner first heard Slick, then the electrifying singer in another San Francisco band, the Great Society. "She just tore me up," Kantner confessed to Gleason. Slick's arrival in the Airplane (replacing Anderson in October 1966) and her searing vocal bravado on the band's 1967 Top 10 singles, "Somebody to Love" and "White Rabbit," turned the Airplane into a national phenomenon, a group of underground idealists with commercial clout.

By 1969, Kantner and Slick were the Airplane's power couple, romantically involved (their daughter, China, would be born in 1971), driving the band musically and lyrically, and generating their own series of galactic-revolution albums, beginning with Kantner's *Blows Against the Empire*, the first album to bear the name Jefferson Starship.

Kantner and Slick's relationship "certainly changed things in terms of the political infrastructure" of the Airplane, Kaukonen admits. The guitarist also re-

FROM TOP: © MORTON BEEBE/CORBIS; DON PAULSEN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; © JAY BLAKESBERG

Michael Moore's New Fight

After staying quiet for most of the Obama years, the filmmaker is back to take on the right with a flag-waving new movie

BY ANDY GREENE

AT LEAST HALF A DOZEN PEOPLE have tried to kill Michael Moore. But the attempt that really stands out in his mind is the guy with the fertilizer bomb in 2004. "He was going to plant it under my house in Michigan," says Moore. "But one night he was cleaning his AK-47 and it went off. Neighbors called the cops, and when they showed up he had all this ammo, bomb-making stuff and a hit list, with me at the top. He went to the federal penitentiary."

Few liberal activists have a stronger track record of infuriating conservatives than Moore, whose new film, *Where to Invade Next*, hits theaters nationwide on February 12th. In recent years, though, the death threats and murder attempts have subsided – as has Moore's once-ubiquitous public presence. His last documentary, *Capitalism: A Love Story*, came out more than six years ago. He spent most of his time on lower-profile projects, like starting his own film festival, though he also endured the death of his father and divorced his wife of 22 years.

But Moore says the main reason he sat on the sidelines through most of the Obama administration is simple exhaustion: "I said, 'I want to be one of millions. I don't want to be a leader.' I realized that I could keep making these movies if we didn't change the central problem, which is an economic system that was unjust."

Moore was inspired to make movies again after witnessing the Occupy Wall Street movement and the beginnings of the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. "A younger generation no longer saw 'socialism' as a bad word," Moore says.

So he got to work on *Where to Invade Next*, in which he travels across Europe, showing that countries like Finland and Iceland do a better job letting citizens live the American dream than America does. He has lunch with public-school kids in France, marveling at their elaborate, healthy meals, and visits convicted murderers in Norway housed in prisons nicer than most New York apartment buildings. "It's a subversive and dangerous film because it pulls the rug out from [under] Fox News," he says. "I'm carrying the flag and trying to make the country a better place."

Moore has regained his fighting spirit in other ways. He was one of the loud-



Moore in New York in January

est voices calling attention to the crisis in Flint, in which the city's water supply was tainted with poisonous amounts of lead. This past month, he spearheaded an effort to have Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder arrested for failing to prevent the situation.

Moore sees the extreme right turn of the Republican Party as a clear sign that it is losing the long game. "It must have been very loud and stinky when the dinosaurs were in their final days," he says. "But it's just that the dinosaurs were dying. The

planet wasn't dying. In the end, young people, women, blacks and Hispanics are going to rule this country. That's why I'm an optimist about the future of America."

In line with this optimism, Moore decided a few years ago to get rid of his entire security team and take his chances in public, bomb-wielding maniacs be damned. "I don't worry about it anymore," he says. "I gotta go sometime, and I've just made peace with that."

THAT '70S SHOW
Cannavale on the
set of *Vinyl*



The Secret History of Seventies Rock

With 'Vinyl,' Martin Scorsese and Mick Jagger take a deep dive into the underbelly of the decade's music biz

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

WELCOME TO NEW YORK, 1973: The spirit of rock & roll is a cesspool of money, drugs and bodily fluids. *Vinyl* is the excellent and hotly awaited new HBO tale of the Seventies music business, executive-produced by the glimmer twins of Martin Scorsese and Mick Jagger,

VINYL SUNDAYS, 9 P.M., HBO

along with *The Sopranos'* Terence Winter. The mobbed-up record labels are trying to squeeze every last drop of blood they can get from what's left of the Sixties. On the streets, punk and hip-hop are just starting to fester. Up in the boardrooms, it's business as usual – a promo hustler drops by to visit his favorite radio DJ, giving him

the hundred-dollar handshake, except by now the payola nut is up to five grand and a gram. The promo man and the DJ snort a few lines of “Bolivian dancing dust” off the record on the turntable, while Chicago’s “Saturday in the Park” plays. That perky little hit has never sounded so sordid. Can you dig it?

Vinyl gives the Seventies New York rock scene the *Goodfellas* treatment. Bobby Cannavale stars as the Henry Hill figure: Richie Finestra, head honcho of struggling American Century Records and a veteran of the label wars of the early Sixties. As he recalls, “When I started in this business, rock & roll was defined like this: two Jews and a guinea recording four schvartzes on a single track. Now it’s changed so much it’s not even rec-

ognizable as the thing people used to be so afraid of.”

He’s a racket boy who worked his way up in the New York clubs, bragging, “You think you work hard? Try scraping Chubby Checker’s vomit off the inside of a toilet stall.” But now his label is falling apart; nobody knows what’s going to hit big next. He wants to sell out to Polygram, but first he needs to sign some heavy hitters, so he has his people scrounging around for the almost-famous. James Jagger, Mick’s 30-year-old son, is priceless as the singer for the up-and-coming proto-punks the Nasty Bits. Meanwhile, Finestra’s partying takes a toll on his marriage to Olivia Wilde, a former Factory model turned into a bored suburban housewife. She meets a Nico-style scenester at a party,

BRIGITTE LACOMBE/HBO

who coos, "Andy asked for you just the other night! Lou was with us."

Vinyl uses the gritty details of Seventies rock culture to tell the story, like the moment when a room of jaded label hacks sit around listening to a record from this weird new pop group from Sweden named Abba. ("The music's garbage, but I'd fuck the blonde." "Can you beg in Swedish?") A cardboard cutout of Rod Stewart in the corner looks on sadly, as if he wishes he could warn them the future will be like nothing they imagined.

The show has a great sense of American sleaze – the Scorsese-directed premiere episode revels in the petty criminal details of how nickels and dimes get cranked out of the old-school music machine, whether that means dumping cutouts or kneecapping artists who get out of line.

Passionate music fans rub elbows with gangsters and killers – yet sometimes they're the same people. The weak spots come when actors try to impersonate real-life rock stars, as in the clum-

'Vinyl' has a great sense of American sleaze – it revels in the details of how money gets cranked from the music machine.

sy scenes where Cannavale argues with Led Zeppelin. The guy playing Robert Plant looks more like Dave Mustaine after raiding Dee Snider's wig vault, and Zeppelin manager Peter Grant, legendary as a terrifying hulk of brute force, is portrayed as looking more like a crankier Phil Collins.

1973 was also the year Scorsese dropped *Mean Streets*, the film that made his bones as a director and changed all the rules of Seventies cinema, especially in the way it used rock & roll to tell the story. *Mean Streets* was also the movie that fused the genius of both Scorsese and Jagger, with the Stones on the soundtrack – the classic scene where Robert De Niro glowers in the club to "Jumpin' Jack Flash."

So this is a shady world Scorsese and Jagger know well. In one fantastic nightmare sequence, Cannavale scores blow downtown, then goes to the Mercer Arts Center to see the New York Dolls play "Personality Crisis," as the violence of the music and the madness of the fans make him sweat his brains out through his leather jacket. It's a perfect soundtrack to the personality crisis that's going on in his soul – and also for the state of rock & roll. Paint it black, baby.



Jimmy Page and Zeppelin at the Garden in '73

The Annotated 'Vinyl'

The show mixes fiction with true rock history. A guide to its real-life references

Led Zeppelin at Madison Square Garden, 1973

TV VERSION In the show's pilot, set in 1973, Richie Finestra (Bobby Cannavale) visits Robert Plant at the Garden to talk him into signing with his label. Later, we see cameras filming as the band blasts through "Somethin' Else."

REAL STORY Zep played three sold-out shows at the Garden in July 1973, shot for the concert doc *The Song Remains the Same*.

'Maury Gold'

TV VERSION Finestra's first boss, seen in flashbacks, is a label owner with ties to thugs with Italian surnames.

REAL STORY The character is likely based on Morris Levy, the notorious boss of Roulette Records. Levy had links to the Genovese crime family and allegedly terrified and swindled Tommy James.



David Johansen



Kool Herc and the birth of hip-hop

TV VERSION One evening, Finestra's limo passes an apartment building – number 1520 – from which funky, jump-cut DJ music is blasting.

REAL STORY

On August 11th, 1973, Clive "Kool Herc" Campbell DJ'd hard-funk records in the rec room of 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx, a party generally credited to be the first hip-hop jam.



Levy

Mercer Arts Center

TV VERSION Finestra watches as the New York Dolls rock the Mercer so hard it literally collapses.

REAL STORY The building that housed Mercer crumbled on August 3rd, 1973. The

Dolls, who often played the venue, weren't there.

Velvet Underground at the Dom, 1966

TV VERSION In a flashback, Richie meets his future wife at a venue resembling the East Village club as the VU play "Venus in Furs."

REAL STORY The Velvet's '66 residency at the Dom marked Nico's first performances with the band.



Lou Reed

Bobby Cannavale's Personality Crisis

How the 'Vinyl' star charmed Mick Jagger and got to play the coolest, craziest music exec that never was

BY ALEX MORRIS

A COUPLE OF YEARS BACK, Bobby Cannavale went to see Mick Jagger about a job. The Emmy-winning actor had been tapped by Martin Scorsese and Terence Winter to play the lead in a show that was being kicked around at HBO, but the project was really Jagger's idea – conceived two decades ago as a film that pulled the curtain back on the music industry of the 1970s – so Jagger was the man to please. And thus far, he hadn't been. "I remember being really freaked out about what the lighting should look like in my living room," Cannavale says now of a Skype call gone wrong. "I was like, 'I want him to think I'm cool.' So I wore black, you know? Black's rock & roll." The feedback Cannavale got afterward was that maybe he'd come off as too intense, too much like his (pathologically violent) bootlegger character on *Boardwalk Empire*, and not enough like the complex, drug-fueled but ultimately redeemable music exec Jagger envisioned.

Which was how Cannavale found himself driving to Washington, D.C., with girlfriend Rose Byrne in tow, to see the Stones play and meet Jagger in the flesh. They went to Jagger's room at the Four Seasons ("I didn't even know a hotel room that big existed. Like, I couldn't find a bathroom"), they talked music ("I just tried not to say much"), and eventually Cannavale mentioned a YouTube video of a James Brown concert where both Michael Jackson and Prince came onstage: "Michael does the moonwalk and people go crazy, and then Prince is carried through the crowd on the back of his bodyguard. I showed it to Jagger, and he died. We must have watched it 10 times. I felt like, 'Oh, we're good now.'"

In fact, it's hard to imagine a person who Cannavale, 45, couldn't win over, as he tells this story from the back booth of the Knickerbocker, a favorite New York haunt where he greets the waitresses by name. Byrne is due to have Cannavale's baby three days from now, but he's still got the easygoing vibe of a dude whose

team tends to win. "You know," he says, "I grew up with a bunch of factory workers. It doesn't make any sense I'm here. When I stop to think about it, I think, 'Aw, something's gonna get figured out, and they're going to realize it's a fake ID.'"

Cannavale grew up in Union City, New Jersey, with an Italian dad who worked in a chemical plant and a Cuban mom who worried, with reason, that her oldest son was up to no good. "Like, the worst that we did was vandalism," Cannavale says, laughing. "A lot of throwing things through quarters so we can go to the arcade or buy beer." His mother encouraged him to get involved with their parish, which was how he found himself in the choir, working as an altar boy and playing a gangster in his first acting gig ever, a church production of *Guys and Dolls*.

After his parents' divorce and a couple of expulsions ("I was a class clown; the nuns didn't like that"), Cannavale (barely) got his high school diploma and began trying to get work as an actor across the river in New York, showing up at downtown theaters to ask for odd jobs, cleaning bathrooms in the hopes of having a few lines thrown his way. To get by, he worked as a guy who opened cab doors at Tavern on the Green, a bartender at the T.G.I. Fridays by Grand Central Terminal and as a greeter on the 88th floor of the Empire State Building ("That was only a week, because I was getting nosebleeds").

When he booked a show, he psyched himself up by pretending that Al Pacino would be coming to see it, and while Pacino didn't come in those days, Sidney Lumet's daughter did. They met, married and had a son when Cannavale was 25. They divorced in 2003, but not before Lumet became, as Cannavale puts it, "like a dad to me" – one of many older mentors he credits for his success.

Boardwalk was the breakout role he'd longed for (though he had already gotten that Emmy for playing Will's boyfriend on *Will & Grace*). At his first table read, he was seated next to Scorsese. "If you're an actor from New York and you're Italian-American," Cannavale says, "you grow up hoping Marty Scorsese knows your name at some point before you die. And the very first scene, I beat this old guy to death with a wrench, and Marty was laughing hysterically at the violence. He kept hitting me under the table, hitting my knee, going, 'Ah, you're gonna be so great!'"

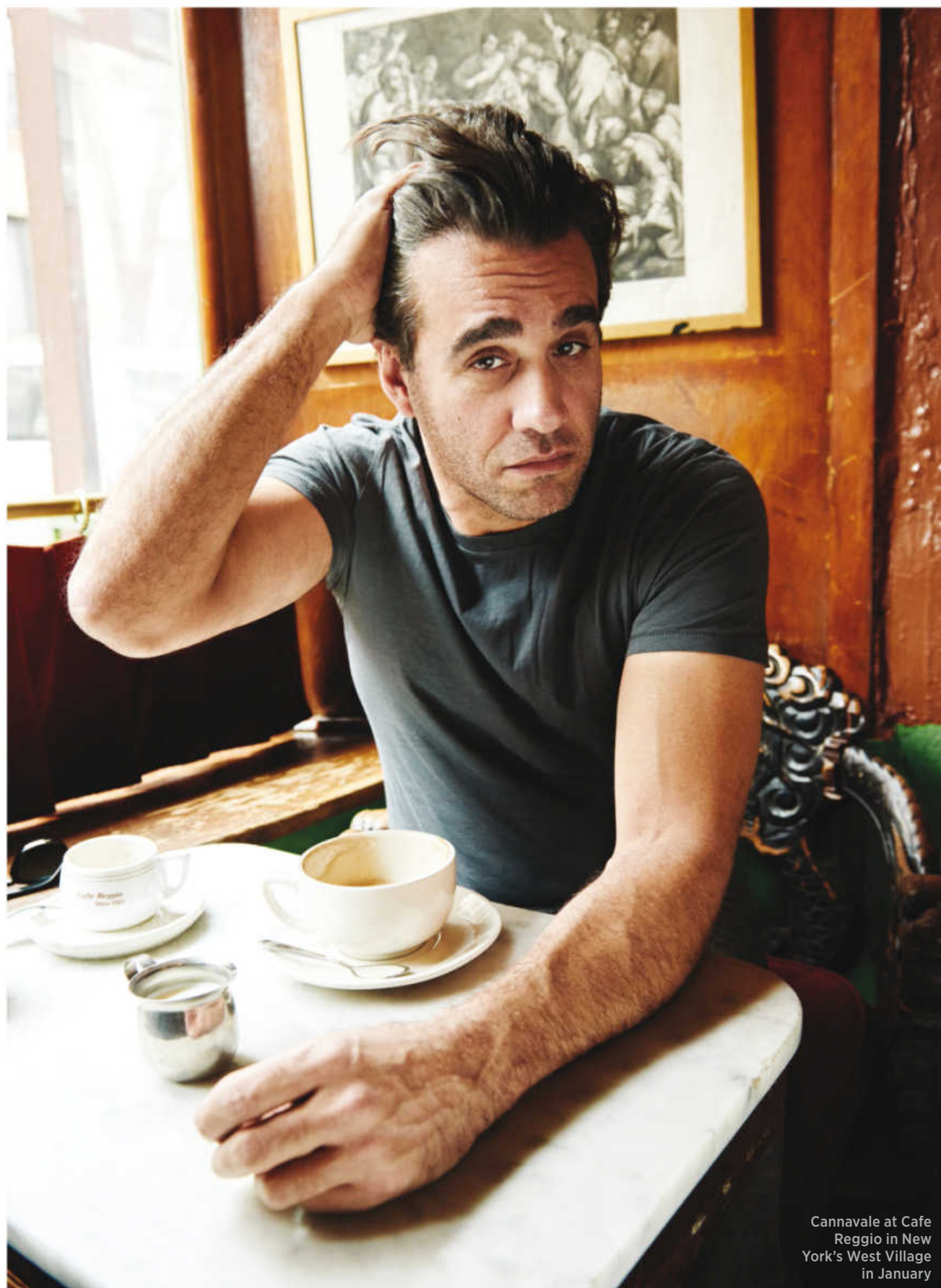
For a guy who grew up with a subscription to this magazine, however, *Vinyl* hits closer to home. A teenage Cannavale gravitated to many of the New York artists who are featured in *Vinyl*, from Lou Reed

to the New York Dolls (he even got to hang out with Dolls singer David Johansen to prepare for the series). Today, he's just come from Second Hand Rose, a record shop where the owner chatted about watching Allen Ginsberg read a poem off toilet paper, while Cannavale

hunted down the Beatles and Joe Turner. "[My character] runs a massive corporation like an artist, you know?" he says. "It's just about this guy trying to figure out how to remain an artist."

Which, as luck would have it, is something Cannavale has discussed with none other than Pacino, who did finally come see him in a show, after which Cannavale was cast to play his son in *Danny Collins*. The two became fast friends ("He's the best texter," Cannavale says. "He loves exclamation points and capital letters"). But as *Vinyl* attests, having an artist's soul in a tough's body isn't easy: If Cannavale's recent roles have an underlying current, it's one of vulnerability, a sense that they might be hard as nails on the outside, but there's something crumbling within. "A character should always have a secret," says Cannavale. "I feel like we all do." 

"I wanted him to think I was cool." Cannavale says of his first Skype call to Mick Jagger. "So I wore black, you know? Black's rock & roll."



Cannavale at Cafe
Reggio in New
York's West Village
in January

HALSEY READS THE comments, all of them. She knows what every random kid online thinks of her, and unwise as it may be to take on that psychic burden, it's hard to blame her: The 21-year-old, Jersey-bred alt-pop singer-songwriter had an online fan base built on pure charisma well before she signed a record deal. But in the six months since the release of her gold-certified debut, *Badlands*, and the much-hyped, divisive single "New Americana" (about being in a generation "raised on Biggie and Nirvana"), she's become an old-fashioned rising star, complete with an upcoming sold-out show at Madison Square Garden. "I have to remember for every kid saying something awful, there's a kid saying something great," says Halsey, who couldn't even mourn David Bowie on Twitter without haters accusing her of faking it. "Because I have this incredible sold-out tour."

Some artists have mixed feelings about their breakthrough song. Is that the case with you and "New Americana"?

It's a cool song. I love performing it. But it wouldn't have made it into the album if I had my way. It was this tongue-in-cheek song that kind of got shoved down people's throats. It became this cultural anthem that it wasn't supposed to be, and it got so blown out of proportion. People would kind of say I was the voice of a generation, and I'm standing behind them, fucking drawing a line across my neck going, "Eh-eh, eh-eh, no, no, that's not what I'm trying to say here." I almost think the fact that so many people hated it so much is largely responsible for my success, because it made people talk about it.

What are you doing duetting with Justin Bieber on his new album?

You hear, "Oh, Justin would never put a no-name like Halsey on his record. [Bieber's manager] Scooter must be representing her," which isn't the case at all! But they asked, and, like, pop music is fucking fascinating to me. I also learned how quickly I could go from having never met someone to having the world think I'm dating them. My mom texted me, "Are you dating Justin Bieber?" I was like, "Mom, what the fuck? Don't you think I would tell you?" But when we performed on the *Today* show, it was just so real, so emotive, so evocative – two people connecting in this love song. There was a moment where I think he and I

Q&A



Halsey

The 'New Americana' singer on duetting with Justin Bieber, playing arenas, taking on Internet haters and avoiding guitars

BY BRIAN HIATT

were both kind of like, "Are we...are we...is this real?"

You're a big rock fan, so why is there almost no guitar on your album?

Every song on *Badlands* I wrote on a guitar, and there will definitely be more guitars on my next record. A guitar can be so human, so sorrowful, so angry, and I wanted to figure out how to achieve that vibe without having to actually use guitars, because *Badlands* is a very futuristic record – and making it that in an era of futuristic music is a really hard thing to do! There's something very old-fashioned about a guitar, to me. That's probably a shitty term to use. I mean more "nostalgic," and that's just because in my adolescence, I listened to guitar-type music. Music is cyclical – guitars are going to come back, and it's going to feel very fresh.

Do you think the lines between genres are more permeable right now?

Genre in 2016 is just absolute bullshit. Half the records on hip-hop radio are pop records at their core, and half the records in fucking alternative radio are pop. And pop radio doesn't even know what the fuck it's doing. I end up pleading my case to alternative programmers – you're telling me that my music is too dark for pop, too pop for alternative, and urban radio won't touch it – so we have a record that doesn't fit in. And what is more alternative than that?

What do you have in mind for your first headlining arena shows?

I just went on tour with the Weeknd, and he used tons of fire. I was like, "Ooh, I need that!" But I want to build a show that's a grand, cinematic experience without hiding behind production elements as a crutch, without using those things to cover up my lazy ass. You still have to be able to perform your fucking ass off.

You happen to be biracial, bisexual and have bipolar disorder – but it drives you crazy that people think you've called yourself "tri-bi," right?

I fucking hate it, the idea that something like that would be trivialized down to a fucking hashtag. I mean, there's a ton of biphobia – people refuse to accept bisexuality as an actual sexuality. And I'm biracial, but also white-passing, which is a unique perspective. So these kids say, like, "Oh, fucking tri-bi Halsey! She'll never miss an opportunity to talk about it!" I want to sit them down like a mom and go, "Six months ago you were begging for an artist that would talk about this shit! But then I do, and you say, 'Oh, not her. Someone else.'" 



NEW
JUICY FRUIT
GUM WITH
STARBURST
FLAVORS



RandomNotes



Stones: Red-Hot in Chile!

After two weeks of L.A. rehearsals, the Rolling Stones arrived at soundcheck at Estadio Nacional in Santiago, Chile, for opening night of their South American tour. "I'm excited to go some places I've never been – Peru, Bolivia," said Ronnie Wood. "It'll be good fun!" Before the tour, the band also reportedly squeezed in studio time for its first album since 2005. "It's my pulse – being in the studio and kicking ideas about," Keith Richards said this fall. "It's still a turn-on!"

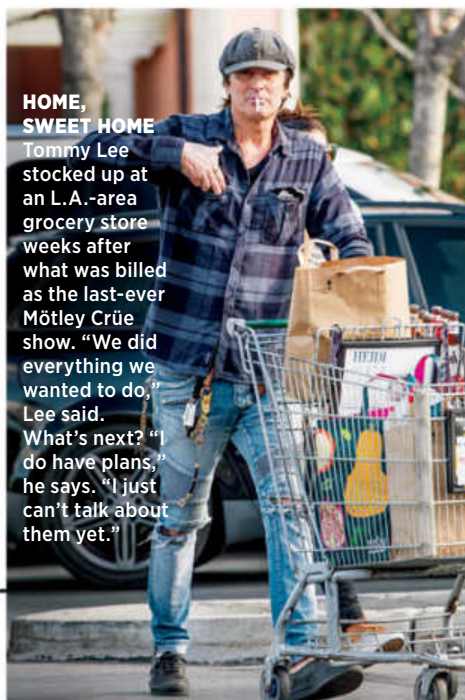
MASKED AND ANONYMOUS

Sia went incognito at Newark Airport the day she released *This Is Acting*, which features songs originally written for singers like Rihanna. "Nobody would do them," Sia says. "It's an experiment to see if they were radio-appropriate."



APPLE PIE

Fiona Apple sang at a live reading of *Dr. Strangelove* in L.A. – and got pied by Johnny Knoxville, a nod to Stanley Kubrick's original, scrapped ending for the film.



HOME, SWEET HOME

Tommy Lee stocked up at an L.A.-area grocery store weeks after what was billed as the last-ever Mötley Crüe show. "We did everything we wanted to do," Lee said. What's next? "I do have plans," he says. "I just can't talk about them yet."



WALK THIS WAY

Steven Tyler stepped out with his Yorkies, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, in New York. "One is a teacup I put in my pocket," he's said. "And the other one I put in a sling over my shoulder."



Buddy Messes With the Kid

Leon Bridges stopped in on Buddy Guy's residency at the bluesman's Chicago club, Legends, sitting in with Guy for a duet of Muddy Waters' "She's 19 Years Old." "I just made up my lyrics along the way," admitted Bridges afterward. "It was a great moment." Bridges was also invited up to Guy's office, where he keeps the cognac and corn liquor, and Guy complimented the young singer on his sharp wardrobe. "He was the most humble guy," says Bridges.

WEEKEND WITH BERNIE When Ezra Koenig of Vampire Weekend traveled to the University of Iowa to rally for Bernie Sanders, he wasn't expecting Sanders to join the band. "A few minutes in, I looked over and saw him next to me, singing along to 'This Land Is Your Land,'" says Koenig. "This narrowly beats Steve Buscemi for my top Vampire Weekend stage cameo."



BRUCE DIGS OUT THE BIG APPLE

"Hello, snowbound New York!" said Bruce Springsteen. "Did you survive?" After being forced to cancel one show because of snowstorm Jonas, Springsteen (with Little Steven and wife Patti Scialfa) came back to Madison Square Garden for an epic three-hour-plus set.



Folk Power!

Joan Baez invited friends Jackson Browne (left), Paul Simon and Emmylou Harris to celebrate her 75th birthday at New York's Beacon Theatre. Baez cracked up the crowd with a story about a guy who asked her for an autograph for his grandmother. "[I said] tell your grandmother to go fuck herself!"



MALIBU GAGA Lady Gaga spent quality time on her Malibu property with her favorite steed, a gift from her label, Interscope. "Today on my doorstep was delivered a White Angel from heaven," Gaga wrote when the horse arrived in December. "She's such a spiritual girl!"

SURE SHOT Longtime Knicks fans Mike D (left) and Adam Horovitz chilled courtside at Madison Square Garden. Horovitz composed music for the new romantic comedy *The Truth About Lies*.



FEELING HERSELF Nicki Minaj touched up at a 76ers-Warriors game in Philly. Minaj recently announced she's producing a television show, *Nicki*, based on her early life.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JESSE LIROLA; JIM WATSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; DANA OISORTION/YAVIN; MITCHELL LEFF/GETTY IMAGES; JAMES DEVANEY/GC IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; DOB NUTS/AKM-GSI; KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES

THE DIRTY WAR ON SOLAR POWER

All over the country, the Koch brothers and utilities have been blocking solar initiatives. No place is the problem clearer than in Florida, where the Sunshine State's vast solar potential has gone to waste

★ By Tim Dickinson ★

AFTER DECADES OF FALSE starts, solar power in America is finally poised for its breakthrough moment. The price of solar panels has dropped by more than 80 percent since President Obama took office, and the industry is beginning to compete with coal and natural gas on economics alone.

But the birth of Big Solar poses a grave threat to those who profit from burning fossil fuels. And investor-owned utilities, together with Koch-brothers-funded front groups like American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), are mounting a fierce, rear-guard resistance at the state level – pushing rate hikes and punishing fees for homeowners who turn to solar power. Their efforts have darkened green-energy prospects in could-be solar superpowers like Arizona and Nevada. But nowhere has the solar industry been more eclipsed than in Florida, where the utilities' powers of obstruction are unrivaled.

The Sunshine State has the best solar-ity east of the Mississippi, and the third-best rooftop solar potential in America. Yet measured by solar production, it ranks just 16th in the nation. It's dwarfed by solar giants like California. Florida even lags behind Northern states like New Jersey, Massachusetts and New York. "It defies logic," says former Florida Gov. Charlie Crist. "It's absolutely absurd."

The solar industry in Florida has been boxed out by investor-owned utilities (IOUs) that reap massive profits from natural gas and coal. These IOUs wield outsize political power in the state capital of Tallahassee, and flex it to protect their absolute monopoly on electricity sales. "We live in the Stone Age in regard to renew-

able power," says state Rep. Dwight Dudley, the ranking Democrat on the energy subcommittee in the Florida House. "The power companies hold sway here, and the consumers are at their mercy."

The full political might of Florida's IOUs was on display in December, when a deceptive campaign, funded by the state's electric utilities, crushed a citizen-led effort to open Florida to solar competition through the 2016 ballot. "When your opponents have no ethical foundation, have unlimited resources and are willing to say and do anything to defeat you," says Stephen Smith, director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, which led the pro-solar effort, "it's a tough hurdle to overcome."

IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE that the utilities have fought so hard. The rise of cheap, distributed solar power poses a disruptive – and perhaps existential – threat to the traditional electric utility business.

Monopoly electric utilities used to make sense. Dirty power, generated at a distance from population centers, was carried over a set of transmission lines to homes and businesses. Consumers got reliable power from a single provider. IOUs were guaranteed a profit – both for building power plants and transmission lines as well as for the electricity itself.

But in recent years, the nation's IOUs have been abusing their monopoly powers to profit from massive infrastructure projects. Utilities more than doubled their capital expenditures last decade; costs were paid for by electric customers, whose power bills have soared nearly 40 percent. For investors, the formula is simple: More infrastructure equals more profit.

The rise of distributed solar power poses a triple threat to these monopoly gains. First: When homeowners install their own solar panels, it means the utilities build fewer power plants, and investors miss out on a chance to profit. Second: Solar homes buy less electricity from the grid; utilities lose out on recurring profits from power sales. Third: Under "net metering" laws, most utilities have to pay rooftop solar producers for the excess power they feed onto the grid. In short, rooftop solar transforms a utility's traditional consumers into business rivals.

The surge of solar competition has caught the nation's dirty-power generators flat-footed: The utility trade group Edison Electric Institute (EEI) warns that rooftop solar could do to the utility industry what digital photography did to Kodak, bringing potentially "irreparable damages to revenues and growth prospects."

Few industries are worse equipped to deal with disruption than power utilities. Their profits depend on infrastructure investments that pay off over a generation or more. "Utilities are structured to be in stasis," says Zach Lyman, partner at Reluminati, an energy consultancy in Washington, D.C. "When you get fully disrupted, you've got to find a new model. But utilities are not designed to move to new models; they never were. So they play an obstructionist role."

THE SUNSHINE STATE IS A GOLD MINE for its monopoly IOUs. Air conditioning drives the second-highest electrical consumption in the nation; the average Florida household spends \$1,900 a year on power – 40 percent more than the national average. Fossil fuel dominates electrici-



ty generation: Florida is 61 percent dependent on natural gas, followed by coal at 23 percent. Solar makes up less than one percent of the state's energy mix.

Key policies that have spurred a rooftop solar revolution elsewhere in America are absent or actually illegal in Florida. Unlike the majority of states, even Texas, Florida has no mandate to generate any portion of its electricity from renewable power. Worse, the state's restrictive monopoly utility law forbids anyone but the power companies from buying and selling electricity. Landlords cannot sell power from solar panels to tenants. Popular solar leasing programs like those offered by SolarCity and Sunrun are outlawed. Rooftop solar is limited to those who can afford the upfront expense; as a result, fewer than 9,000 Florida homes have panels installed.

Florida's anti-solar policies are zealously defended in Tallahassee. "It's no secret we play an active role in public policy," says Mark Bubriski, spokesman for Flori-

da Power & Light (FPL), the largest IOU in the state. FPL is the monopoly power provider for 4.8 million customers, whose electric bills generated \$1.65 billion in profit for the company last year.

The utilities are top political donors in Florida. Since 2004, the state's four largest IOUs contributed at least \$18 million to state politicians and political committees – a preponderance to Republicans, who now control state government. In addition, since 2007, the companies spent at least \$12 million on lobbying, employing an average of one lobbyist for every two legislators in Tallahassee. "They've got a pretty good harness on the whole deal up there," says Crist.

THE CAPITAL CITY OF FLORIDA is more "Southern Gothic" than "South Beach." Tucked away on Florida's panhandle, Tallahassee is a slow-walking city of white-washed churches, wide verandas and

dusky oaks, draped with Spanish moss. Nothing from its outward appearance would suggest this city of 190,000 is the seat of power for a state whose economy rivals Indonesia's.

A seven-hour drive from Miami, four hours from Tampa and another three from Jacksonville, Tallahassee sits at a far remove from the watchful eyes of voters in Florida's biggest cities. The business of the state transacts in a tiny three-block district in the shadow of Florida's modern Capitol building, a white 22-story tower flanked by a pair of low-slung domes that look – how to put this – happy to see you.

Florida is served by a part-time legislature. Lawmakers make less than \$30,000 a year and are subject to strict term limits. The paltry pay and constant turnover combine to fill the capital with baby-faced lawmakers who run point on policy matters in which they have little expertise. Even Republicans say the model enhances the power of special interests. "Out in

eight years?" says one GOP state representative, referring to term limits. "You're giving more power to lobbyists." Florida's pay-to-play energy politics outrage honest conservatives. Nancy Argenziano is a 61-year-old firecracker of a politician with short dark hair and piercing eyes. She served as a GOP state legislator for more than 10 years. Until 2010, she chaired the state's Public Service Commission (PSC) – the arm of the legislature that regulates Florida's power companies. Argenziano is unsparing in her assessment: "The legislature is owned by the utilities. To me, it's extremely corrupt. The legislature takes millions from utilities, who make billions from [the decisions of] the PSC. They get what they pay for."

mandates and terminated a modest rebate program for the private purchase of solar panels. "I don't want to give handmaidens a bad name," says state Rep. Dudley, "but they're servants of the utility industry."

Even as it rolls back green initiatives, the PSC has rubber-stamped fossil-fuel boondoggles. In an unprecedented move, it approved FPL's proposal to crack for natural gas – in Oklahoma. FPL convinced the PSC that the project, financed by the electric bills of its customers, would save money. But after a rocky first year, the project has already cost ratepayers nearly \$6 million. "It's a total rip-off," says Dudley.

Dudley has the fire of a reformer. A tall man who favors pinstripe suits, he has repeatedly introduced legislation to curb the

SACE is directed by Stephen Smith, a tall Tennessean with water-blue eyes who dresses like Tom Wolfe on casual Friday. To advocate for solar choice, SACE knit together an implausible "green tea" coalition – comprising Tea Party activists and environmentalists like the Sierra Club, in alliance with Florida's retail and restaurant federations, as well as religious groups like the Christian Coalition of America.

The campaign led with voices from the far right. Coalition member Debbie Dooley helped found the Tea Party and today directs Conservatives for Energy Freedom. The 57-year-old grandmother may run her shoestring outfit out of the back of a 2010 Hyundai Sonata, but she has an impressive track record, spearheading a two-year

“THE LEGISLATURE TAKES MILLIONS FROM UTILITIES,” AN EX-GOP LAWMAKER SAYS. “AND THEY GET WHAT THEY PAY FOR. TO ME, IT’S EXTREMELY CORRUPT.”

The utilities' political reach even extends to the governor's mansion, a state-ly brick building graced by a classical portico that – only in Florida – sits a 10th of a mile from a pawnshop where you can turn your gun into cash. Republican Gov. Rick Scott's narrow 2014 re-election was financed by more than \$1.1 million in contributions from the IOUs.

The governor did not respond to interview requests. But Scott has earned ridicule for allegedly banning state officials from using the terms "global warming" and "climate change." Shortly after his re-election, he filled an open slot on the PSC with Jimmy Patronis, then-Florida state chair of ALEC, which fights renewable-energy mandates and climate regulations.

Bowing to the businesses the PSC is supposed to regulate, the commission recently scaled down Florida's energy-efficiency

abuses of the PSC and open Florida to solar competition. But he says he can't even get a hearing in the Republican-dominated capital. "From a legislative perspective," he says, "we've really been stonewalled."

SEEKING TO CRACK OPEN Florida's energy market at the ballot box, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE) mounted a \$2 million campaign to qualify a "Solar Choice" amendment for the 2016 election. The constitutional amendment would have ended Florida's rare lock on electric-ity sales; only Kentucky, Oklahoma and North Carolina have similar prohibitions. It would have freed consumers to install leased solar panels on their rooftops at no upfront expense. Retailers could have installed solar arrays and sold power to tenants in the same shopping complex.

fight that overturned anti-solar restrictions in Georgia in 2015 – creating thousands of clean-energy jobs.

At a campaign luncheon in a Presbyterian church in downtown Tallahassee in November, Dooley is wearing a lime-green suit jacket and matching jeweled earrings, and lamenting that she had to leave her Chihuahuas – Chi Chi and Chico – back home in Buford, Georgia. With a delicious drawl, Dooley insists that her view is the right view: "Conservatives champion free-market choice, not government monopolies that stifle competition."

Dooley embodies a political trend that many environmentalists don't appreciate, says Jigar Shah, the former CEO of SunEdison who now runs his own investment firm, Generate Capital. A passion for solar has taken root among people who may not "give two shits" about the environ-

FROM LEFT: ANDREW HARNIK/AP IMAGES; © IMAGO/ZUMAPRESS.COM; MANDEL NGAN/GETTY IMAGES; PETE SOUZA/THE WHITE HOUSE; DIGITALLY ALTERED BY "ROLLING STONE"; NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY/SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; FLORIDASTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK; ANDREJCE/YOUTUBE; MATTEL

THREAT ASSESSMENT THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SCARY

WITH US

- Trump** humbled in Iowa.
- DeLoreans** to return to production.
- Hillary touts "great idea" of **Obama** as SCOTUS justice.
- Following D.C. blizzard, only **female senators** and aides show up to work.
- Dutch police may combat drones with trained **eagles**.
- Teen films own illegal ascent of **Great Pyramid**.
- Barbie** gets curves.



AIN'T NO SUNSHINE Solar activists in Florida face stiff opposition from utilities. "The power companies hold sway here," one state lawmaker says, "and the consumers are at their mercy."

ment, Shah says. "The reason Debbie Doolley is involved is that the Tea Party people who support Ted Cruz believe very strongly that the electric utility company is every bit 'the man' as the government is."

CONFRONTING A POPULAR threat to their monopoly power, the utilities fought back – with a vengeance. But rather than campaign directly against the Solar Choice amendment – which polled at nearly 70 percent – the IOUs mounted a competing ballot initiative called the "Smart Solar" amendment. Despite the name, their amendment doesn't advance the cause of solar power. Quite the reverse: "It locks existing statute into the constitution," says a skeptical Republican Florida lawmaker.

"They've twisted the words around so that it keeps the monopolies in place," former Vice President Al Gore explained at

a Climate Reality Project conference in Miami, blasting the utility initiative as the "dumb" solar amendment. Even Jack Abramoff, the infamous influence peddler, traveled to Tallahassee to denounce the utility amendment as "right out of the lobbyist playbook." Abramoff, who served four years in federal prison, is now seeking atonement by crusading against special-interest corruption. The Smart Solar campaign, he says, "reminds me very much of what we used to do in the old days... Now it's a fight between two amendments – so they can obfuscate what's going on."

The Smart Solar amendment is financed, nakedly, by the state's top investor-owned utilities, which ponied up \$4 million through December, more than half the campaign's total haul. "We are proud of who supports our campaign," says spokeswoman Sarah Bascom. Other supporters include conservative pressure groups fund-

ed by fossil-fuel interests. 60 Plus – a seniors group that has received \$15 million from the Koch donor network – donated more than \$1 million. The National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC), a tiny organization with an oversize name, added \$100,000. The NBCC is funded by major polluters, including Exxon; its latest convention was sponsored by Koch Industries and Gulf Power. NBCC founder Harry Alford, unabashed, touts the "cozy, productive relationship we have with the fossil-fuel corporations." The Koch grassroots political group, Americans for Prosperity, does not appear on Smart Solar's donor rolls, but did issue a call to arms for its Florida activists to fight solar choice.

The Smart Solar campaign played dirty. In a seemingly transparent effort to confuse petition-signers, the utility-backed measure aped the "choice" language of the rival pro-solar campaign with its formal ballot title. Smart Solar called itself Rights of Electricity Consumers Regarding Solar Energy Choice. "It's pure deception," an exasperated Smith tells *ROLLING STONE*. "Many, many people have been misled into signing their petition – it's fraud!" Bascom insisted there was no intention to mislead. "It would defy all logic," she tells *ROLLING STONE*. "Why would we confuse ours with one that does not have public support?"

In the end, the utilities crushed the Solar Choice campaign by spending it into submission. Qualifying an amendment for the ballot in Florida is onerous and expensive under the best of circumstances. It requires nearly 700,000 signatures, and any serious campaign hires paid gatherers.

By mounting a competing measure, the utilities sparked a financial arms race – with the utility-backed measure typically paying gatherers twice as much per signature. "When we were paying a dollar on the street, they were paying \$2," says Smith. "When we were paying \$2,



AGAINST US

Flat-Earther B.o.B

Kanye, Wiz Khalifa, Amber Rose spar in TMI Twitter feud.

Bloomberg flirts with presidential bid.

White actor cast as **Michael Jackson**.

Sarah Palin blames Obama for son's domestic-violence arrest.

Microsoft billionaire's superyacht destroys coral reef.

Boko Haram burns kids alive in village massacre.

Zika virus

they went to \$4." Soon, the IOUs had forced solar proponents into a burn rate of \$350,000 a week. It was unsustainable.

Solar Choice threw in the towel in January. The campaign is now regrouping, aiming to qualify instead for 2018, when more than 400,000 signatures it has gathered would still be valid. Smart Solar is pressing ahead for the November ballot. If it passes, the utilities will be entitled, under the constitution, to hit rooftop solar customers with high fees simply to maintain their connection to the grid.

But Florida Power & Light isn't waiting until November to take a brazen victory lap. In January, it submitted a proposal to the PSC, seeking to hike its electric rates by nearly 24 percent over the next three years and asking the commission to reward FPL investors with a higher guaranteed rate of return. If approved, FPL's electric consumers would typically pay an extra \$13 a month.

"FPL spent millions fighting to deny consumers solar choice," says Dooley, furious. "Now they have their hand out, asking for a subsidy."

FLORIDA IS AN EXTREME example of utility-funded efforts to thwart the rise of solar power at the state level. But it's not unique.

Major utilities across the nation are seeking to undermine competition from rooftop solar by hiking its cost. "The utilities have realized they're completely up a creek without a paddle," says Shah, who sees the utilities lashing out at solar not from a position of strength but of desperation. "They can certainly fight it. But they're going to lose."

The utilities are working from a playbook developed by ALEC – the Koch-funded group that promotes "model" bills, often adopted virtually wholesale by Republican legislatures – and the Edison Electric Institute, the utility trade group.

The political argument advanced by ALEC and EEI is that rooftop solar generators are freeloaders on the traditional grid infrastructure: They rely on conventional power when the sun isn't shining, but because they sell power back to the grid, they don't pay much on net. An ALEC report on rooftop solar implausibly holds up utilities as champions of the economically vulnerable, arguing that net metering creates a "regressive tax, subsidizing the rich by picking the pockets of the poor."

Such arguments ignore the clear value rooftop solar producers create for other customers on the grid – including producing power at times of peak demand and

adding resiliency against outages. Most obvious: Rooftop solar producers pay for their own equipment and volunteer their real estate – avoiding expenditures by utilities that would otherwise get passed along to ratepayers. A 2013 study for Arizona's largest utility found the benefits of rooftop solar "exceed the costs by more than 50 percent."

After some initial legislative setbacks, the utilities and their allies are now working in the shadows – seeking to persuade utility regulators to put the brakes on solar by, in essence, taxing rooftop producers.

Arizona – a state that spends up to 85 percent of the year in sunshine, and stands second in the nation with a solar capacity of 1,800 megawatts – was ground zero for this approach. Last winter, the

es in the United States." SolarCity is now suing SRP, alleging violation of federal antitrust laws.

Emboldened, for-profit utilities went for the jugular in America's solar giant, California. Other states measure solar output in megawatts; California produces more than 10 gigawatts – nearly half the nation's total. Rooftop solar has exploded thanks to bountiful sunshine and a generous net-metering law. Today, nearly five percent of California's power is generated by rooftop solar. But this success also triggered a state review of the payments to rooftop producers – opening the door for utility monkey-wrenching.

The state's biggest utilities lobbied the California Public Utility Commission (PUC) last year to hit rooftop producers with Arizona-style fees. Southern California Edison sought increases averaging \$800 a year for its rooftop solar customers. But in the Golden State, solar producers are now a formidable political constituency all their own. In November, advocates of preserving the state's net-metering program delivered 130,000 signatures to the PUC in wheelbarrows.

In December, the head of the PUC declared the utilities had failed to provide "a real basis" or "evidence" to justify the massive rate hikes on solar customers. In January, the PUC adopted only minor changes; the ruling was hailed as a huge win by the solar industry.

Nevada has some of the greatest solar potential in America; Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid touts his home state as the "Saudi Arabia of solar energy." But where California rejected the Arizona model, Nevada is taking it to the next level.

In late December, the state's PUC commissioners – all appointed by Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval – announced huge price hikes for rooftop solar customers. The changes will add nearly \$40 a month to solar homeowner electric bills – wiping out the \$15 a month in typical solar savings. The Nevada charges were put into effect despite the PUC's own admission, reported by *Forbes*, that rooftop solar customers "do not impose any significant additional costs" on other ratepayers. In an unprecedented move, the new charges were also made retroactive, punishing the state's 17,000 existing solar customers.

Until recently, Nevada was one of the fastest-growing solar markets, but providers are now fleeing the state: SolarCity, Sunrun and Vivint are winding down their operations. "This is the first state to



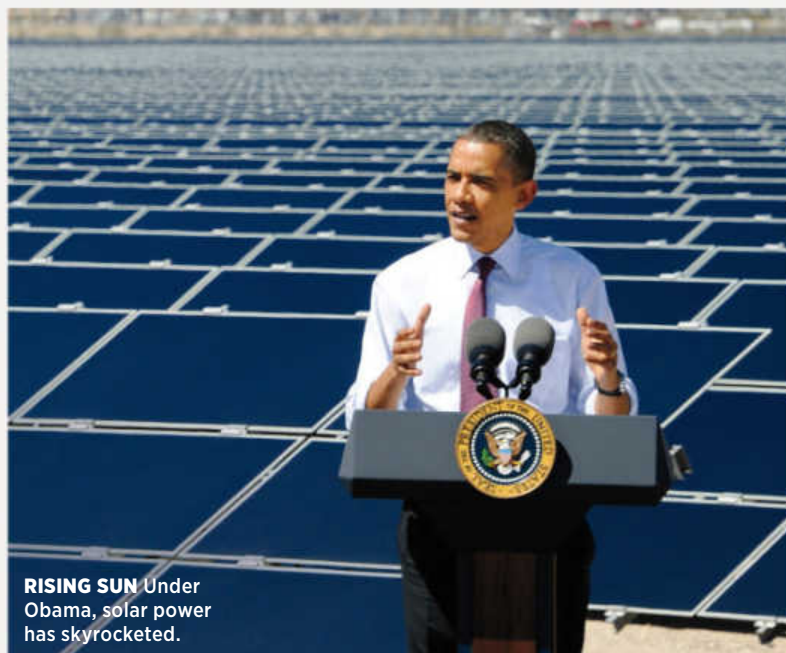
BATTLE LINES

Above: Gov. Scott has taken more than \$1 million from the utilities. Right: Tea Party co-founder Dooley has fought for solar and says it represents true conservative values.



Salt River Project (SRP), the utility that serves Phoenix, hiked fees for rooftop solar customers and tacked on a murky "demand charge." The effect was to increase bills for customers with solar panels by a whopping \$50 per month.

SRP touts itself as a "community-based nonprofit." But in an internal e-mail, an SRP director condemned solar advocates as "the enemy." (SRP would disavow the comment as a joke.) The utility's price hike puts into action policies long promoted by ALEC, which endorses "a fixed grid charge" for solar customers. SRP's new fees have throttled the local rooftop market: Solar lease applications are down as much as 96 percent, according to SolarCity. In a scathing open letter, CEO Lyndon Rive blasted SRP for working to "entrench" its monopoly by "shuttering the solar industry in one of the sunniest plac-



RIISING SUN Under Obama, solar power has skyrocketed.

OBAMA'S SOLAR BOOM

America's spectacular solar growth is beginning to reshape not only the U.S. energy landscape but our economic future as well

When President Obama took office, America had less than two gigawatts of solar power installed. At the close of 2015, there were more than 24 gigawatts – enough to power 5 million homes. As the cost of solar equipment has dived, more than 80 percent since 2009, the number of homes with rooftop solar panels has exploded, growing more than tenfold to 750,000. Utility-scale solar is also expanding: A single solar plant in California recently bought 9 million panels online.

Solar is no longer making changes around the edges of America's energy mix. Over the first six months of 2015, solar accounted for nearly 40 percent of the nation's new electrical capacity. The solar jobs picture is equally bright. The industry has been creating jobs 10 times faster than the economy as a whole. Now employing more than 200,000, Big Solar is bigger than the coal industry and accounts for more jobs than oil and gas extraction.

The solar boom has been driven by a mix of market economics and government support. On the supply side: High-tech manufacturing, particularly in China, is causing exponential reductions in the cost of solar panels. U.S. demand has been goosed by state governments – through mandates for zero-carbon power generation; by a federal solar-investment tax credit, which Congress just extended through 2019; and by solar's share of the historic \$51 billion investment in clean energy paid for by the 2009 stimulus. "It's an American energy revolution," Obama declared at the National Clean Energy Summit last summer – one that's threatening entrenched interests. Obama blasted the Koch brothers, by name, for a "massive lobbying campaign" to "protect the old, outdated status quo" of fossil-fuel dominance. "This is about the past versus the future," Obama insisted. "And America believes in the future." **T.D.**

close up a solar market, eliminating thousands of jobs as we speak," says Bryan Miller, vice president of public policy for Sunrun. His company is suing the state, promising to expose cronyism between Sandoval and the state's biggest utility, Nevada Energy. Noting that the governor's top two political advisers are lobbyists for the utility, Miller insists, "This is a story of political corruption." ("Of course, we reject this latest spurious and reck-

less charge against Nevada's state government," Sandoval spokeswoman Mari St. Martin tells *ROLLING STONE*.)

Roiling the economy of an early-voting state in an election year, Nevada's solar politics have already become a growing issue in the presidential campaign. At a Las Vegas rally just before New Year's, Bernie Sanders called the PUC decision "just about the dumbest thing I have ever heard."

EVEN AS THE SOLAR INDUSTRY faces unprecedented regulatory obstruction at the state level, its future on the federal stage has rarely been brighter. In mid-December, Congress stunned activists, solar-industry executives and investors by cutting a deal to renew billions in federal support for solar power that had been slated to expire at the end of 2016 – avoiding a "solar cliff" that could have staggered the industry.

Signed into law with the \$1.8 trillion year-end budget, the solar accord extends a tax credit that offsets up to 30 percent of solar project costs – even as those costs continue to plummet. The impact is projected to be massive: 20 gigawatts of new solar power added over the next five years, nearly doubling the nation's output.

But this freakish fit of solar bipartisanism is fragile. In no uncertain terms, the American solar industry will be on the 2016 ballot. Last year, the Obama Environmental Protection Agency finally unveiled its mechanism to curb the power sector's carbon emissions. By 2030, the Clean Power Plan would reduce national electricity sector emissions by one-third. Under the plan, the administration projects renewables like solar will rise to 28 percent of U.S. power generation.

Clean Power will be implemented – or not – depending on the will of Obama's successor. Republicans have made clear their ambition to dismantle the work of the current EPA. Donald Trump calls global warming "bullshit" and a "hoax." Ted Cruz calls the Clean Power plan a "radical attempt to destabilize the nation's energy system."

Hillary Clinton, by contrast, has promised to build on Obama's plan, vowing to treat it as the "floor, not the ceiling." Clinton has an ambitious plan for solar energy. She calls for the installation of half a billion solar panels in her first term – a move that she says would drive a sevenfold increase in U.S. solar-power production. For his part, Sanders has not detailed a specific solar policy, but has promised "massive" investments in clean power to drive an 80 percent reduction in emissions by 2050.

Over time, Dooley believes, solar power will win out, not only on the economics, but because there's nothing partisan about it. In fact, she says, solar power is one of the few things on which Democrats, Republicans and independents can find common ground. "Who doesn't want to be able to have solar panels on their rooftops?" Dooley asks. "Who doesn't want to become an entrepreneur – selling energy generated on their private property to their neighbors, and make a profit off of it?"

Other than the monopoly utilities and the Koch brothers, who have their backs, she asks, "Who doesn't want energy freedom?"



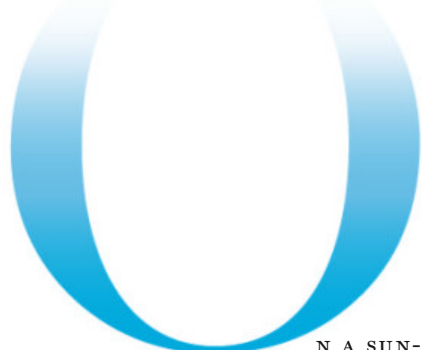
How Chris Martin
learned to live with the
haters and get Coldplay
back into the sun

By Josh
Eells

Photograph by
PEGGY SIROTA

Into The Great Wide Open

Martin last
month in
Westlake
Village,
California



ON A SUN-kissed afternoon at the beginning of the year, Chris Martin hops out of his chauffeured SUV at a luxury beachfront hotel and stands on the Santa Monica boardwalk, inhaling deeply. "Isn't it beautiful?" he says, taking in the golden sand and the Pacific. "Amazing day." As it happens, "Amazing Day" is also a song by Martin's band, Coldplay, from their new album, *A Head Full of Dreams* – Exhibit A that Martin is very much in person the way he seems in his lyrics: exuberant, a little corny and easily amazed.

Martin stretches his legs and takes a minute to soak in the sun. He's got a swimmer's build, tall and broad-shouldered, with a few days of stubble and that inef-fable famous-person glow. He's wearing a turquoise trucker hat with a yellow smiley face on it, and taken with his own countenance, the effect is almost redundant – a smiley on top of a smiley. He also seems to have consciously uncoupled from his shoes.

Martin lives just up the road in Malibu, in a \$14 million house he and his ex-wife, Gwyneth Paltrow, bought shortly before their 2014 split. "Right out there," he says, pointing up the coast. He woke up this morning and listened to two episodes of *Serial*, then, in an effort to get pumped up for the band's upcoming gig at the Super Bowl halftime show, watched all of *Rocky IV*. "Rocky IV has the most awesome training sequence of all time," Martin says. "I think it triggers the young boy in me who saw it and was like, 'Wow – if you wanna do something, just fucking lift logs!'"

Martin likes to be on the move, so we take off on a walk. He walks often in L.A., both for transportation and for recreation. "There's always been a flow of anxious energy running through him," says his best friend, Coldplay creative director Phil Harvey. Actor Simon Pegg, another old friend, suspects it's also a way to dodge paparazzi. "His trick is to move fast," Pegg says. "It helps that he has very long legs."

We head off down the boardwalk, past tourists, cyclists, rollerbladers, sea gulls. The barefoot Martin steps on a pebble and bends down to pick it up, conscientiously tossing it into the sand to save the next per-

son from the same fate. I take the opportunity to ask about his lack of shoes. Martin sighs. "I don't really like talking about it, because it makes me sound like a nob," he says. "But the truth is, two days before Christmas, I was volunteering at this place for homeless people, building a dog kennel, and someone accidentally dropped a massive panel of wood on my toes." At first he was worried they might be broken; it turns out they're not, but it still hurts to wear shoes. On the bright side, it was a good excuse to spend the holidays with Paltrow and their two kids, Apple, 11, and Moses, 9.

"It's always out there in the media, but I have a very wonderful separation-divorce," Martin says. "It's a divorce – but it's a weird one. So I was with them, and it was just lovely. It's fun to flip between the public music persona and 'Let's put together this IO Hawk – what do I screw-drive next?'"

I tell him that I'm impressed he could build an IO Hawk, one of those two-wheeled hoverboard contraptions. "That's actually a terrible example, because I didn't touch it," Martin says, laughing. "But you get my point."

Martin is famously one of the most charming people in music: unfailingly kind, unimpeachably generous and almost comically considerate. He's quick with a hand on the shoulder or a playful backslap, and he radiates enthusiasm and bonhomie. "It always irks me when he's portrayed as this shoe-gazing miserablist, because he's really, really silly," says Pegg, who says Martin once turned up to his house with his underwear pulled up to his chest, Urkel-style, "just for shits and giggles." Witty and self-deprecating, he can be humble to a fault: "It's very sweet, but sometimes it's just like, 'Chris, shut the fuck up and stop apologizing,'" Pegg says. "Me and Gwyneth used to go see them live, and he'd start playing some song and go, 'Sorry about this, we've got to play it' – and Gwyneth and I would look at each other and go, 'For God's sake, of course you fucking have to – everybody in the audience wants to hear it!'"

On the other hand, Martin has been very famous for more than a decade, and a skeptical observer might just see him as savvy about his reputation. For instance, when he very thoughtfully uses his iPhone to record an interview on a windy beach, just in case mine doesn't work – but then does the same in a very not-windy restau-

rant. Martin would shake his head at such cynicism; at one point, he gives \$20 to a beach busker, and when I half-jokingly ask if he would have done the same if I weren't there, he looks genuinely hurt. "Yeah," he says sarcastically, "if you weren't here, I would have punched him in the face and stolen his guitar."

We've been ambling along for a while when I happen to spot a credit card on the ground. Someone must have just dropped it. "Briana," Martin says, reading the name from the front. "I don't think I have her number." He tries searching for her on Twitter. "Poor thing," he says. "She hasn't even signed it. What do we do?"

I suggest we take it and try to track her down online over lunch. Martin frowns. "Let's stay here for 10 minutes," he says. "If she comes back, we'll make her day. And if she doesn't, we'll do your plan."

So we plop down in the grass and wait. To pass the time, Martin tells a joke. "Have you heard about the Muslim guy who lost his wallet?" he says. I'm suddenly worried for him, but also curious where this is

going. "Someone found it and gave it back to him," Martin goes on, "and the Muslim guy was so happy he said, 'Listen – as a favor, let me warn you: Don't go to Glastonbury this year.' The other guy was like, 'Whoa, thank you. Why?' And the Muslim guy goes, 'Because Coldplay are playing!'"

Then we start talking about his New Year's Eve. Martin was with some famous people whom he'd rather not name. "But about an hour before midnight," he says, "I was feeling a bit anxious. Someone told me when you're feeling anxious, you should write a list of

everything you're grateful for. So I tried it, and it was amazing. A lot of what the, for want of a better word, ancient poets, the Sufis and Buddhists were saying was that if you can tap into that all the time, you'll become happier. And in my experience, it's true. I find that when I remind myself to be grateful, everything looks a bit better."

I ask him what was on his list. "A lot of things," he says. "First of all, just being here. Even that's enough to high-five the mirror. Wow, I get another shot today? Are you kidding? So that was top of the list. And then I've got these two children that I love and a job that I love. I think we've been doing it long enough that I'm allowed to feel grateful for it." ("He's always going on about how grateful he is,"

Contributing editor JOSH EELLS wrote about director Michael Bay in January.

1



ARMY OF ONE

(1) Martin on Father's Day with his two kids, Moses and Apple, in 2015. (2) With reported girlfriend, actress Annabelle Wallis, in October. (3) With Beyoncé in 2006. Martin met the production duo Stargate when he wrote a song for Beyoncé that didn't work out. "She said, 'I really like you - but this is awful.'"



2



3

teases Pegg, "It's his most overused word at the moment.")

Eventually, 20 minutes have passed and still no Briana. "Time to face facts," Martin says. "She's not coming back. Have you read *Waiting for Godot*? That's what we've become. At some point, we have to go have lunch."

Accepting defeat, we head back. We're about five minutes down the boardwalk when a middle-aged guy pedals by on a bicycle. "Briana?" Martin says, joking.

"Yeah?"

We spin around. A few yards behind us, there's a twentysomething girl in jogging clothes with a hopeful look on her face. Martin's jaw drops. "You're not." "Did you find my credit card?" she says.

"Get the fuck out of here! You're Briana? We just Googled you!"

He hands her the card. "Thank you so much!" she says. "Oh, my God." If she has any idea it's Coldplay's Chris Martin, she doesn't show it.

"We fucking did it!" Martin says, high-fiving me. He turns back to Briana, concerned. "You need to sign that, you know." "I know," she says sheepishly.

Martin beams. "You don't understand how happy you've made us. You just made

our day." He gives her a hug. "All right, Briana. See you later." She thanks him again and jogs off. "Wow," says Martin. "What are the chances?"

I tell him it seemed like we were almost more excited than she was. "We were *way* more excited!" he says. "See, man - how can you say there's not fucking magic in the world? It's everywhere!"

BACK AT THE HOTEL, WE head out to the patio for lunch. "Do you like fish tacos?" Martin asks. "They have the best fish tacos here." He spent years as a

vegetarian during his marriage to Paltrow, but these days, he says, "If Rocky eats it, I do too." Just as we sit, a reluctant manager comes over to say that he's very sorry, but Martin can't dine without shoes. Martin cheerfully runs to the car and returns shod, and when he does, he notices the actor Edward Norton at the next table.

"Hey, man, how you doing?" Martin says, extending a hand.

"Hey, man!" says Norton. "Fabulous. I surfed this morning."

"You did? Where?"

"Right on our beach."

"How was it?" asks Martin. "I looked at it, but it was kind of windy and bumpy."

"Fantastic," Norton says.

"Lucky boy."

"We should go out sometime. If you want to."

"All right, great," says Martin. "Cool." He comes back to our table and smiles. "One of my surfer friends."

Martin is joking: He and Norton aren't actually big friends, but they know each other in the way that most famous people kind of know each other. Martin says, as a kid growing up in the English countryside, he'd watch Hollywood movies like *Beverly Hills Cop* and *Swingers* and think, "How on Earth do you get there?" "Turns out," he says, "all you have to do is play some minor chords."

Martin grew up in Whitestone, Devon, in what his father, Anthony, jokingly calls "the toe of England." Phil Harvey, who's known Martin since they were 13, describes him as "kind of an odd one out," and, diplomatically, "well-known without being Mr. Popular." "He was sporty, and he could make people laugh," says Harvey, "but he also cannot help but display his vulnerability. And I think that sometimes made him a target for people who were, on reflection, assholes."

Martin pursued music early, playing in teenage cover bands like the Rockin' Honkies (Otis Redding, Motown) and Bunga (Jane's Addiction, grunge). "I remember one time we played 'Been Caught Stealing,'" Martin says, "and this girl from the girls' school came up to me and said, 'You just ruined my favorite song.'" After boarding school, he went to college in London, majoring in ancient history, but he was really just there for the music. That's where he met the guys who would become Coldplay: guitarist Jonny Buckland, bassist Guy Berryman and drummer Will Champion. "Chris is like a sun in a solar system," Harvey says. "He just happened to get the right pieces of rock to come into his gravitational pull at the right time."

Pegg, who is godfather to Martin's daughter (and vice versa), first met Martin at a Coldplay gig in 2000, right after their first album was released. "We were at this afterparty and he said, 'Do you want to go for a walk?'" Pegg recalls. "So we walked to the ATM, and he was kind of freaking out about how big the band were getting. I remember sort of talking him down, like, 'Don't worry, man - it's going to be great.'" At the time, they were playing to crowds in the low four digits. Harvey was managing the band back then, and when its second album, 2001's *A Rush of Blood to the*

Head, blew up, selling almost 20 million copies worldwide, Harvey got sick and had to leave for three years. "And in the time that I was gone, he married Gwyneth and had two kids," Harvey says. "When I came back, I mostly remember being struck by his change in stature – both physically, and in terms of his presence. He held himself differently, in a good way. He was just walking taller."

Nevertheless, Martin struggled with the scrutiny of being in an A-list power couple. "Gwyneth had been in the limelight for a long time, so she was much better at handling it," says Pegg. "Whereas I think Chris found it extremely confusing. It was flattering that people were interested – but, at the same time, deeply disturbing that people would make shit up or follow them around."

But these days, Martin seems to have grown at ease with his rarefied position. The band's new album features appearances by his pal Beyoncé (who sings on a club track called "Hymn for the Weekend"), as well as President Obama, whose rendition of "Amazing Grace" from the funeral of Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney is sampled on a song called "Kaleidoscope." Martin won't say how they got it approved, except that they asked a friend who was visiting the White House to put in a good word. Thankfully, *Champion* is less circumspect. "It really does help if somebody in your band is good friends with Bono," he says. "He can make anything happen. 'You want a unicorn? I know a guy.'"

Martin also capitalizes on his fame by throwing his weight behind humanitarian causes like Oxfam's Make Trade Fair ("I think we did that, didn't we?" he jokes) and, more recently, Global Citizen's initiative to help end poverty. He says that if the trade-off is that "sometimes my life has turned into candy" – i.e., gossip – he really doesn't mind. "For two percent of the day, I'm a celebrity," he says. "Most of the time, I'm a guy just trying to figure it out."

We get up to leave. As we do, Martin scribbles a little note on the back of the lunch receipt along with a doodle of himself. "Hey, Ed," he says, sliding it to Norton. "That's my e-mail if you want to surf."

"Oh, great," Norton says. "See you later, man."

"Cheers," says Martin. Then he heads off to pick up his kids from school.

TWO DAYS LATER, IT'S flooding in L.A. – an El Niño-fueled downpour has dumped an inch and a half of rain in 24 hours. On the winding road out to the Malibu studio where Martin did much of the work for *A Head Full of Dreams*, downed trees and rocks lie in the road, and the muddy canyons are covered

in mist. It's the kind of weather that could make an Englishman homesick. Naturally, Martin wants to take a walk.

"It's not so bad," he says, pulling on a wool cap and buttoning his jacket. "In a few minutes, the sun will come out and it'll be beautiful." It seems impossible, but sure enough, he's right.

As the skies clear, we set off down toward the ocean. Martin, who lives about a mile away, hadn't spent much time in the neighborhood before moving here, but he'd read that Bob Dylan was a longtime resident. "He's a bit like Santa Claus to me," Martin says. "I don't want to see him or meet him, but it's nice to know that he's in the world." A black Prius drives by, and Martin stares at it intently. "Just checking," he says. "Sometimes you get paparazzi."

Martin moved here at a transitional time in his life; he and Paltrow had been having trouble for more than a year. "We'd just come off of this big stadium tour for [2011's] *Mylo Xyloto*," Martin recalls. "Finishing a big tour like that, there's a weird hollowness at the end of it. You've got two years of being needed every night, a lot of energy coming at you, and then it's all gone and you have to see what's happening in your personal life. So a lot of things were just...not there."

He's guarded about the times that followed, but friends say they were pretty dark. "Chris had a really bleak period," says Harvey. "He was in pain and struggling to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We were all worried about him – the band, his family." Worried about what? "Um...his safety? When someone's really, really low and on their own a lot, as a friend, your mind goes to the worst-case scenario. That period didn't last forever, but there was a time when we were all regularly checking in on him, just trying to make sure he wasn't on his own."

"When Chris feels good, he feels really good," adds Buckland. "And when he feels bad, he feels really bad."

Martin and Paltrow announced their separation in March 2014. Two months later, Coldplay released their sixth album, *Ghost Stories* – an unmistakable breakup chronicle, on which Martin sings about being "broken inside." Coldplay's best songs ("Yellow," "The Scientist," "Viva La Vida") have always had a kind of epic ache, mixing tragedy and uplift, but *Ghost Sto-*

ries was spare and gray – all cloud and no rainbow. The band did little to promote it, playing few shows and giving no interviews. "It would have been a bit raw," Martin says. "A big public relationship had just ended, and there was a relatively intimate, sad album. It was sort of self-explanatory."

Martin believes there are two ways to cope with the end of a marriage. "You can come at it very aggressively and blame and blame," he says. "Or you can put yourself in the garage, so to speak. Take yourself apart and clean off the bits. Reassemble." His own reassembly was inspired by two works of literature in particular: Viktor Frankl's Holocaust memoir/psychotherapy manifesto, *Man's Search for Meaning*, and "The Guest House," by the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi. In the latter, Rumi compares the human psyche to a sort of emotional bed-and-breakfast, in which each new guest – joy, anger, sadness – should be welcomed and celebrated because all of them make us who we are.

(It's basically the Sufi version of *Inside Out*.)

Martin says he had "a year of depression" after the split, but now, "I have the tools to turn it around."

Martin says he hasn't spent much time studying Sufism or any other Eastern traditions. ("I've seen that Kurt Russell film *Big Trouble in Little China* – does that count?") "But that one Rumi poem changes everything," he says. "It says that even when you're unhappy, it's good for you. So for someone like me" – who used to "flip between despondency and optimism, many times a day" – "I was like, 'What?!' It took me about a year to get it," he says. "A year of depression and all that. I still wake up down a lot of days. But now I feel like I've been given the tools to turn it around."

In the meantime, Martin had already envisioned a follow-up, which he knew would be called *A Head Full of Dreams* – a big, optimistic pop album, full of upbeat rhythms and colors. "It's almost like he set himself a road map for getting out of his hole," Harvey says. "I think it gave him a framework to get himself enjoying life again."

Buckland says they felt free to be more optimistic, more danceable. "We'd worked the intimate melancholy out of ourselves."

To help oversee the album, Coldplay enlisted Stargate, the Norwegian production duo who've made hits for Beyoncé, Rihanna and Katy Perry. They'd met a few years ago, when Martin wrote a song that he hoped Beyoncé would record called "Hook Up," and went into the studio with



LIFE IN TECHNICOLOR

Above: Buckland, Martin, Champion and Berryman (from left) in November. After 2014's *Ghost Stories*, "We'd worked the intimate melancholy out of ourselves," says Buckland. Right: Martin with his high school band, Rockin' Honkies, in 1993.



Stargate to try it. (It didn't work out: "In the sweetest possible way," says Martin, "she told me, 'I really like you - but this is awful.'") Still, Martin liked Stargate and they got along, so when it came time to record *Dreams*, he asked them and the band independently if they might collaborate.

At first, "everyone was very skeptical - including me," Martin says. (Adds Buckland, "I think the rhythm section was much more skeptical." According to drummer Champion, it was more like curious.) They were all mindful of what might be called the "Poochie effect" - "Hey, young people, we heard you like Avicii and Selena Gomez!" In the end, it was all about finding a balance. "There were some real pop, pop, pop songs that were like, 'That's too much, we've gone too far,'" says Martin. "And then there were songs that were too much the other way - where [Stargate] were like, 'Nah, that's a bit miserable.'"

The album debuted at Number Two. "It's way too early to tell if it was successful," says Martin. "But I know that I really love it."

Eventually our hike brings us to Point Dume, a craggy bluff jutting out over the Pacific. It's practically the definition of wind-swept. "Look at this epic place,

man!" Martin says, stepping over a rope marking the end of the trail. "You have to be careful. Don't get too close to the edge."

Martin scoots out to the edge of the cliff. "I want to show you this thing we did the other day when we were training," he says. Slowly, cautiously, he gets on all fours, his toes inches from the ledge. "So you do a plank right here, right?" he says, lifting himself up. "And if you look backwards" - he peers between his legs, upside down, at the expanse of sea - "you can't see land. It feels like you're flying."

All it takes is a little shift in perspective. "Try it," says Martin. "Isn't it cool?"

I do. And it is.

THE NEXT NIGHT, MARTIN is in the Pacific Palisades, after dropping Apple off at her theater class. "Their mom is out of town, so I'm on dad patrol," he says. He seems exhausted. He spent the morning chaperoning Moses' field trip to the San Gabriel Mission. "It was hilarious - six adults, three teachers and 47 nine-year-olds," he says. "My eyes

are tired." He forgot to pack his lunch, so he hasn't really eaten. "I just have all the respect in the world for teachers," he says. "I said to them, 'How do you do this?'"

Martin heads off. "Come on, then," he calls. "Time for our daily walk." It's getting dark, and at one point, we're walking single file on the muddy shoulder of Sunset Boulevard, shouting over the cars and bushwhacking through tree branches to avoid being hit. I start to wonder if maybe the walks aren't a way for Martin to dodge questions as well as paparazzi. Back when they were married, Paltrow once said she "definitely [had] to coax things out of him when we talk," and I'm beginning to see what she meant.

Eventually, we find a Starbucks, and Martin sits down with a soy chai latte with "Chris" scribbled on the cup. I ask if we can talk about his divorce. "Go for it," he says. "It's been a long time, you know." I wonder how he thinks he's changed since the split. "You mean apart from all the ways we've been talking about?" he says, laughing. "It's hard for me to say, because I hang out with me a lot. But if I had to, I'd

say I feel more grateful. And maybe a little calmer."

On my phone, I show him a clip from a Louis C.K. stand-up routine about divorce. The gist of it is, you shouldn't feel sorry for people who get divorced because things have to get really bad for that to happen. When C.K. jokes that you shouldn't say "I'm sorry" to newly divorced people because "you're making them feel bad for being really happy," Martin laughs loud and long. "I think what he's saying is that everything has its time," Martin says. "But he puts it a little more humorously."

Martin pauses. "It's funny," he says. "I don't think about that word very often - divorce. I don't see it that way. I see it as more like you meet someone, you have some time together and things just move through." Outwardly, at least, he and Paltrow are on such good terms that she appears on Coldplay's new album, singing backup on a song called "Everglow." Martin says he wanted her on it because "it shows that this thing [she and I] have been talking about, about us remaining friends, that it's [Cont. on 65]

Hollywood's King of Pain

Alejandro G. Iñárritu pushed his stars and crew to the edge of sanity – and created a modern epic. By Mark Binelli

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN SCHOELLER

LATE ONE AFTERNOON IN NOVEMBER, only two days after wrapping up final post-production tweaks on his sixth film, *The Revenant*, the director Alejandro González Iñárritu walked into a screening room at the corner of Alfred Hitchcock Drive on the Universal Studios lot in Universal City, California. He was dressed entirely in black, his typical uniform – today, a couture-looking hoodie with extraneous silver zippers, worn over black jeans – and he greeted the assembled audio crew with fist bumps and apologies for his tardiness. He'd driven up from his production office in Santa Monica, where he also lives, and hit traffic, which he normally avoids by zip-ping around town on a Vespa. Somebody got him a Coke.



Inárritu, 52, moved to Los Angeles from Mexico City, his hometown, after the wholly unexpected global success of his first film, 2000's *Amores Perros*, which in English roughly translates as "love's a bitch" – U.S. distributors eventually decided to stick with the Spanish title – and which convinced him to leave the safe confines of the Mexican film community, where he'd spent years as a highly successful director of TV commercials, building a production company with more than 100 employees, and make the move to the big leagues, to Hollywood. When would the timing possibly be better?

He landed at LAX with his wife and two children four days before September 11th, 2001. "All the neighborhoods started getting all these flags," Inárritu says, speaking in heavily accented English. On two occasions, walking his dog, he was stopped by police officers. The cops told Inárritu, whose swarthy complexion had earned him the nickname "El Negro" back in Mexico City, they'd received calls about a suspicious character in the area, that he needed to show them exactly where he lived.

Today, Inárritu is listening to audio mixes of *The Revenant* for theaters outfitted with Dolby Atmos surround-sound. "Every time they invent a new fucking system, we have to do a new test," Inárritu says with a sigh. "Pretty soon we'll have sounds coming out of our asses." The day before, he'd been to a similar test for the IMAX version of the picture. "Sitting too close to the screen, it's almost disturbing," he says. "They'll need to give the audience bags to vomit."

Inárritu, we should note, utters all of these lines quite cheerily. He still curses in English with the mirth of a non-native speaker testing unfamiliar idioms, all of his "fuckings" pronounced with more care than other words and delivered with an unjaded relish. When Inárritu smiles – perhaps because his smiles always seem tinged with irony – his face, thin, with pronounced cheekbones, a mustache and a slightly tufted goatee, assumes a sly, devilish cast. With minimal wardrobe and makeup adjustments, he could play the heavy in an after-school special about the dangers of Satanism.

In a medium-size theater, two sound engineers sit in front of a mixing board

that spans the length of the screen. Martín Hernández, one of Inárritu's oldest friends and collaborators, works at a laptop. We're about to watch Reel 4 of *The Revenant*.

Loosely based on the real-life adventure of a 19th-century American fur trapper named Hugh Glass, the film stars a prodigiously bearded Leonardo DiCaprio, who is mauled by a bear and then betrayed and left for dead by other members of his hunting party. The rest of the movie, on one level, is an immensely satisfying genre exercise, a proto-Western revenge fantasia in the tradition of *Death Wish* or *Kill Bill*, in which the audience endures the cruel sufferings of the protagonist as a pleasure-enhancing prelude to feats of impossible endurance, survival and bloody restitution.

Visually, the film is a spectacular throwback, the sort of epic rarely seen since the era of *Lawrence of Arabia*. It's also a sustained spiritual meditation, as well as an implicit critique of American capitalism, as told through its earliest incursions into the relatively untouched wilderness of the New World. If Inárritu wins Best Director for *The Revenant*, which people who make odds on this sort of thing have been saying is entirely plausible, it will follow

his win last year for *Birdman*, making him only the third director in Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences history to snag consecutive Oscars.

It's funny, though: For all of his accomplishments in Hollywood, Inárritu still describes himself as a frustrated musician. He and Hernández began working together in college as disc jockeys at a pioneering radio station in Mexico City. Inárritu also played in a band and promoted shows, and he admits to paying special, almost obsessive

attention to the sound of his films. "For Alejandro, sound can be more important than visual," says Hernández. "He has an amazing sound memory. If I change something, he will hear it." Inárritu thought of *Birdman*, filmed to appear as if it unfolded in a single, frenetic tracking shot, as jazz: He went into a studio with the Mexican jazz drummer Antonio Sánchez and began recording the soundtrack (almost exclusively percussion) before he'd shot a frame of film, matching the beats with specific lines of dialogue in order to pre-dictate, in Inárritu's words, "the pulse of the film."

For *The Revenant*, he commissioned a spare electronic score from Ryuichi Sakamoto and Alva Noto, avant-garde compos-

ers who have collaborated with Carsten Nicolai on a series of gorgeous, minimalist piano albums, and Bryce Dessner of the Brooklyn band the National. "If *Birdman* has to do more with jazz and theater," Inárritu tells me, "I think this film is more about painting and dreams, when you don't have to think or talk, but just feel. So the silences and the sounds of nature are very, very important to the narrative."

Reel 4 begins with DiCaprio's character lying on a wintry forest bed, staring up at the old-growth trees towering above him like the ceiling of a cathedral, and ends with a thrilling chase scene in which he dives into a river to escape a band of Arikara Indians. As the scene progresses, we watch DiCaprio grunt, gasp, crawl through snow and suck the marrow from the bone of a picked-over buffalo carcass.

Inárritu sits with his arms crossed and a serious expression on his face. When the lights come up, everyone looks at him anxiously. Eventually, he emits a long "Ummmm..." Then he says he's not hearing the ambient sounds coming out of the ceiling speakers, not nearly enough. "It's like one *cojone*, and we need two *cojones*!" he cries, mock-dramatically. "I want to hear more crackling trees. Make the birds louder! If it's at 30 percent, go to 60 percent. Then maybe I say, 'Oh, fuck, too loud!' And we can take it down. Show me the money, as the producer would say."

While the engineers tweak the settings on their boards, Inárritu asks for a second Coke and picks at a plastic tub of peanuts, methodically removing one nut at a time with a thumb-finger pincer gesture. He has to wrap up soon. The next day he's planning to fly to Austin with his son, Eliseo, a senior in high school, for a college tour arranged by Richard Linklater, the *Boyhood* director and renowned Austinite who also happened to be Inárritu's prime rival at the 2015 Oscars. (*Birdman* wound up beating *Boyhood* for both Best Director and Picture.) I ask Inárritu if it's typical for directors to be this involved with the sound mix of a rarefied distribution format. He frowns and gives a shrug. "Ask them," he says, nodding at the sound guys. "I don't think so. I'm a little cuckoo. *Neurotic*." He pronounces the last word with special gusto, just like he does "fuck."



WEEK AFTER THE SOUND tests at Universal, Inárritu flew to New York for a private screening of *The Revenant* near Lincoln Center. After-

ward, Martin Scorsese moderated a Q&A and called the film a masterpiece. Scorsese had just completed his own historical epic, *Silence*, filmed in the Taiwanese countryside, and later, over drinks, he complained to Inárritu, "I'm from New York. I have an aversion to trees. I don't go camping. I don't like horses." Inárritu

Contributing editor MARK BINELLI wrote about Pope Francis in September.



The Pioneer

Above: Filming *The Revenant* with DiCaprio in 2014. Left: With Robert Plant while working as a DJ and promoter in Mexico in the Eighties. "I thought I'd be in jail," Iñárritu says about one ill-fated show. "But one guy died, only."

could sympathize. "I'm the same," he tells me the following afternoon. "We are not, like, guys from the woods."

Iñárritu is dressed entirely in black again, sipping a black coffee in a hotel near Central Park. His son is staying in the room across the hall. A last-minute scheduling conflict had forced the postponement of the Austin visit, but they are planning to check out New York University. Since the ISIS terror attacks in Paris, Iñárritu has also been in regular phone contact with his daughter, María, who is going to school there. "I'm concerned about her," he says. "You know, we went out of Mexico because of the violence. And now I'm more worried in Paris than in Mexico. I said, 'Fuck, the world is becoming very scary for young people.' They are feeling what we felt in Mexico."

Around the time of the release of *Amores Perros*, Iñárritu's mother had her jaw broken by muggers, and his father, in a separate incident, was thrown into the trunk of a car by kidnappers and held for 12 hours for a \$500 ransom. Iñárritu had his own car broken into and all of his family's luggage stolen while on vacation in San Miguel de Allende; afterward, he had to fly directly to New York to accept an award, and he borrowed "an old suit of stripes" from a friend, "the worst, cheapest

suit ever – it's from 1948. I was the worst-dressed director in the history of New York fancy people." That trip was the first time Iñárritu met Scorsese, as it turns out – Scorsese liked *Amores Perros* and had invited Iñárritu to stop by his office – and Iñárritu showed up in the suit, feeling "like a fucking Mafia guy from a Scorsese film."

The rising violence in his home country, coming at a time when his own public profile was increasing, factored heavily into Iñárritu's decision to move his family to L.A. He says it also informed his approach to violence in his films. "The violence became such a painful social situation in my country, with so much suffering, that I didn't find it funny in films," he says.

Iñárritu grew up in Narvarte, the middle-class Mexico City neighborhood where Che Guevara lived in the 1950s while plotting the Cuban Revolution. Iñárritu describes a happy childhood, including a skateboarding phase and a love of prog-rock bands like Genesis and King Crimson. At 17, and again at 19, he got himself aboard cargo ships sailing out of Vera Cruz and Coatzacoalcas, earning his passage by performing menial jobs, and he spent a year in Spain picking grapes and doing odd jobs – even working as a swimsuit-clad dancer in a disco. (Q: Like Magic Mike? A: "God, no! I didn't have the qualities.")

Back in Mexico City, he played guitar in a synth-rock band called Noviembre Uno (Q: Is that the date of a revolution or something? A: "It was the date I met a girl.

We were trying just to play sounds from that period, which...the Eighties was the worst"), dropped out of college, became a local radio celebrity and eventually began directing television commercials. "Even today, if you talk to someone my age, they'll remember us by the radio," Hernández tells me. "I had the morning shift and he had the afternoon. He was the lazy one." In 1989, Iñárritu brought Rod Stewart to Querétaro for one of the first stadium rock concerts in Mexico in years. Thanks to scalpers hawking counterfeit tickets, the venue was so dangerously oversold that one of Iñárritu's friends told him to take the next flight to Miami. "Alejandro," he said, "this will be serious! People will die here."

"There was a moment that I thought I would be in jail," Iñárritu acknowledges. "But one guy died, only."

A MORES PERROS" IS INDEBTED, in many ways, to Quentin Tarantino: three interweaving plotlines, jarring temporal leaps, an underworld milieu. But after the film's visceral delights, the death-haunted, relentlessly somber works that followed felt ponderous, making one long for just a touch of Tarantino's irony and sense of humor. *21 Grams* (2003) featured indelible, gutting performances from Sean Penn and Naomi Watts and took an even more staccato approach to linearity and narrative, but the script leaned too heavily on preposterous Shakespearean coincidence. (Watts' widow falls in love with the very transplant patient, Penn, who received her late husband's heart, a premise that wouldn't even have been acceptable in a Nineties romantic comedy starring Drew Barrymore and Matthew McConaughey.)

Babel (2006) was released to international acclaim, just as Iñárritu's friends Guillermo del Toro and Alfonso Cuarón unveiled their own most-heralded works – *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Children of Men*, respectively – prompting critics to espay a Mexican cinematic renaissance. But the sufferings Iñárritu piled onto his characters were beginning to feel not only sadistic but false. A subplot climaxing with a Mexican housekeeper (Adriana Barraza) stumbling through the desert in high heels and a ripped cocktail dress is so over-the-top, given everything else that's already transpired in the film, it nearly plays as camp.

His next film, *Biutiful*, no less gloomy – the main character, played by Javier Bardem, helps to manage a Chinese sweatshop, has an alcoholic for a wife and is dying of cancer – was critically and commercially Iñárritu's worst-performing picture. Depressed, and approaching 50, Iñárritu says he fell into "a very, very difficult state." To snap himself out of it, he went to a 21-day silent-meditation retreat in the South of France. [Cont. on 64]

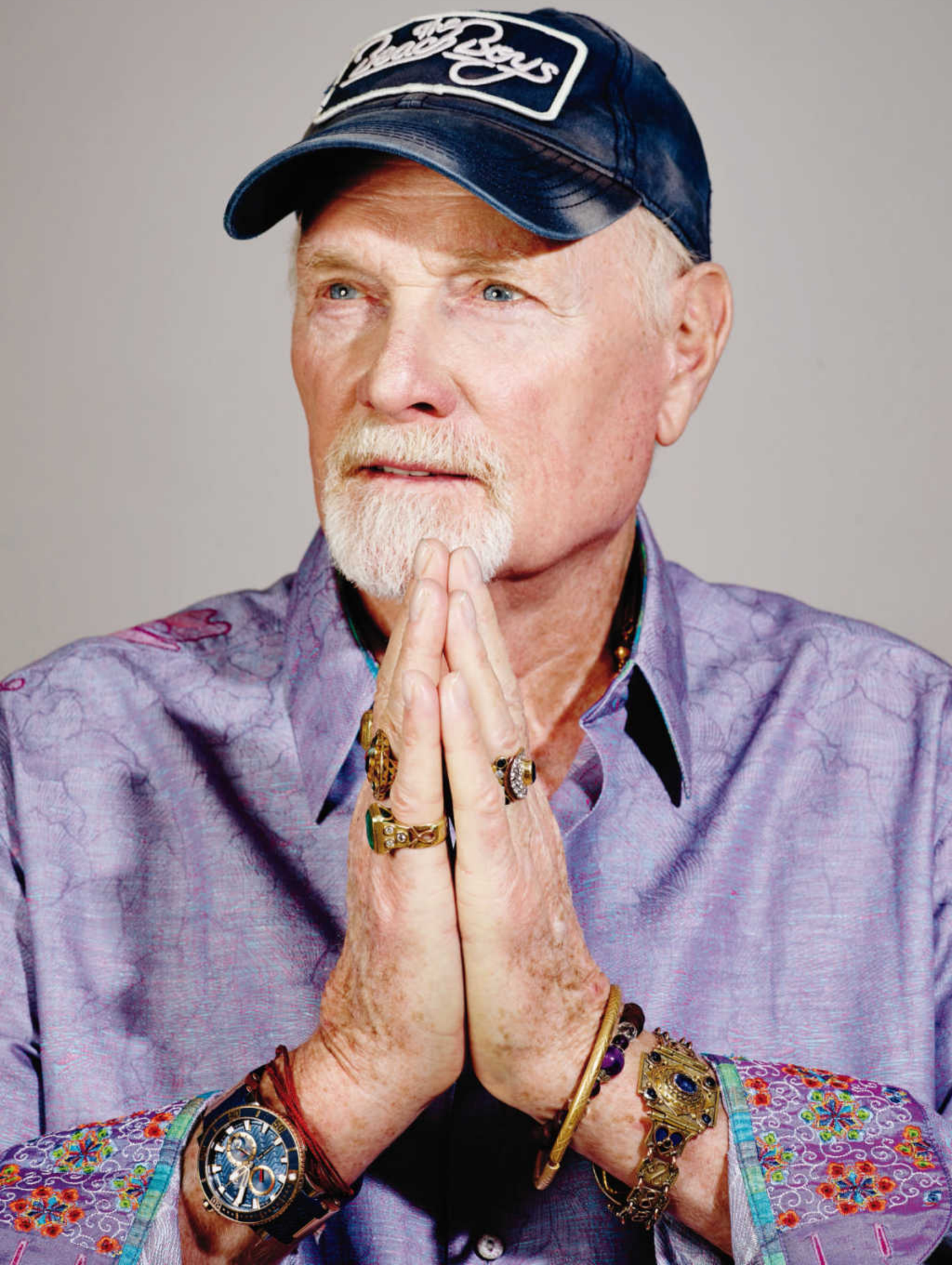
The Beach Boys
singer has been
meditating for 49
years. Why is it so
hard for him to
find peace?

By Erik
Hedegaard

PHOTOGRAPH BY
BRYCE DUFFY

Mike , Love's Cosmic Journey

MIKE LOVE BOUNDS UP THE STAIRS INSIDE HIS MASSIVE LAKE TAHOE home (10 bedrooms in all, 12 bathrooms, two elevators, not to be believed) and into a large walk-in closet stuffed to overflowing with garish, multicolored shirts and a gazillion baseball caps, many of them emblazoned with the name of his band, the Beach Boys. A suitcase rests on the floor. Love nods at it, prods it with his foot. "A lot more shirts are in there," he says, "because, if you must know, I haven't unpacked." ♦ And why should he unpack? For the past 54 years, he and various versions of the Beach Boys, which these days include only him as an original member, have toured almost constantly. On his current outing, he has 172 dates lined up, cramming 19 European shows into 22 days this past December, for instance, and shortly thereafter flying back stateside to give the 6,500 citizens of tiny Avon, Colorado, the chance to hear all about California girls. From there, it's onward, evermore, venues big and small, makes no difference to him. The man is 74. You'd think he'd want to mothball the Beach Boys



caps and Hawaiian shirts he always wears onstage, maybe do something else with the years that remain. Not a chance.

"My cousin Brian loved the studio, but I like performing," he says. "I mean, I've probably sung 'Fun, Fun, Fun' live close to 6,000 times, and there are county fairs where we've broken the attendance records, playing to the biggest crowds they've ever had, 50- to 70-year-olds mostly, their children and their grandchildren. I love making music, and there's never been a time in my life when there wasn't music."

And the fans sure do get their money's worth, with more than 40 songs crammed into a typical two-hour show by the time "Fun, Fun, Fun" finally fades out, the soaring nasal twang of Love's bass-to-baritone range, so essential to the band's five-part-harmony stack, memorable and distinctive, leaving all the Dockers-wearing duffers buzzing happily, if not a little bittersweetly.

The Beach Boys: cars, girls and surfboards. Home movies on a backdrop. All the original members in a swimming pool, falling into and out of a life raft, laughing, fully dressed. Dennis Wilson, gone since 1983, drowned while drunk. Carl Wilson, cancer got him in 1998. Al Jardine, the band's Ringo, still kicking but quietly. Brian Wilson, 73 now, the group's musical genius, visionary, guiding light and the bearer of all those wonderful harmonies, a little wobbly in the mind since 1968, due to drug and alcohol problems and mental illness. Love, still going strong, looking fit and trim, just as he did back in the day, as always the entertaining cornball, joke-telling frontman, the souped-up, flamboyant counterpoint to his introverted cousin Brian, both entirely necessary to the band's enduring success.

At the same time, however, Love is considered one of the biggest assholes in the history of rock & roll. That's been the popular opinion of him for several decades. He just can't seem to shake it. There are "I Hate Mike Love" websites and a "Mike Love Is a Douchebag" group on Facebook. He's been called a clown, the Devil, an evil, egotistical prick, a greedy bully, sarcastic and mean-spirited, and, let's not forget, "if he were a fish, he'd be a plastic bag wrapped around the neck of a beautiful sea lion." Love is mostly able to laugh off this hateful venom, but on occasion he will break down, turn to his wife of 21 years, Jackie, and ask her, "What did I do? Why am I the villain? How did it get to this?"

According to his detractors, it all started in 1966, in a recording studio, with Love expressing his dislike for Brian's work on what became *Pet Sounds*, one of the greatest albums of all time. "Who's gonna hear

this shit? The ears of a dog?" he is said to have said, though he strongly denies it. A year later, he supposedly so criticized the *Smile* project that Brian, that beautiful sea lion of a man, shelved it for 37 years. He has sued or threatened to sue Brian numerous times. Plus, in the 1970s, he used to wear gold-lamé bell-bottoms that were so tight that his (somewhat enviable) package seemed to have equal billing with everyone else. He made the insipid 1988 song "Kokomo," which Brian doesn't appear on and that has become the biggest-selling Beach Boys tune of all time, Love so proud of lyrics like "Aruba, Jamaica, *ooh*, I wanna take ya." He coughed up \$5,000 in seed money so Tipper Gore could start her campaign to censor music. And then there's the baseball cap he wears everywhere he goes, onstage or not. It's universally despised. Even wife Jackie isn't a fan. ("When we go out on dates, I always ask, 'Can you leave the hat at home?'") Everybody knows he's bald. He should embrace it.

He's wearing one today. He steps out of the closet and plucks it off his head. He bends forward. "Yeah, well," he says. "You really don't want to blind oncoming traffic, OK?" And back on it goes.

So, he's got his reasons for the cap, as well as for most everything else, a good bit of which, he says, is just plain flat-out wrong. "The fable is that I'm such an asshole, but a lot of that stuff is skewed by the

ticular, continued lighting up their brains with the more drugs and booze, the better.

Today, Love is tooling around in his wife's Audi SUV, taking a right onto Tahoe's Lake Shore Drive, the lake itself shimmering off into the distance. He looks quite crisp, happy, prosperous and well put-together: wool trousers, striped pull-over, his Van Dyke-type beard trimmed close. He talks in a friendly, easygoing way.

"When I learned to meditate," he says, "I said, 'Hallelujah. I can relax without all that stuff that fogs your mind up.' But everybody has their own path, makes their own choices. My addiction, if it's an addiction, is to meditation."

He has been up since seven this morning, already meditated and practiced yoga, eaten a vegetarian breakfast and spent time wondering how best to release his recent recording of a song he wrote in 1979 called "Alone on Christmas Day."

"It refers to the melancholy of feeling alone on Christmas Day," he says, "but I meant it sweet, in that you're never really alone. It fits a number of situations, whether it's a parent or a grandparent or somebody that you really cared for who is not there anymore."

Like Brian, Dennis, Carl and Al, one could say, but the point seems too obvious to make. So let's get back to meditation for a moment. Have there been periods where you haven't meditated?

"I was cheated and stolen from by my uncle and my cousin, and I don't think it's ever going to be resolved. I mean, how you gonna resolve it?"

crazies," he says. "I never said half the shit that's attributed to me. I mean, I must be pretty prolific in asshole-type things to say, like, I get up in the morning thinking, 'I've got a job to do. How can I be a total jerk today?'" Later, he says, "I've become cannon fodder." He pauses and grins. He could pull back, or continue a serious discussion of how he has been pilloried and why it's so off-base, maybe even apologize for some of the things he's said. But such, apparently, is not his way. "It's *o-pun* season," he says, making a pun for pun's sake, with little regard for how it might sound to those around him.

THE MOST IMPORTANT thing to know about Love is that he meditates twice a day, without fail, morning and night, and has done so for 49 years. He learned meditation from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi himself, in 1967, at which time he forswore pot, hash and hard liquor, his only real vices, while Brian and Dennis, in par-

"Oh, no, that would not be safe," he says, chuckling. "I need to meditate. Well, let's put it this way. It's not good for me to miss meditation. And not good for others, too."

One time he skipped was in 1988, on the night of the Beach Boys' induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Come time to make a speech to the crowd, he started off by saying, "We love harmony, and we love all people, too," after which he hurled insults at Bruce Springsteen, Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, Diana Ross and "chicken-shit" Mick Jagger, while insinuating that he and the Beach Boys were bigger and better than any of them. He struck a grimas-death, tight-lipped pose and was greeted with jeers and boos. At one point, he said, "I don't care what anybody in this room thinks," which was clear enough. He also said, "A lot of people are going to go out of this room thinking Mike Love is crazy," which was true too.

He scratches at his beard, recollecting this awful, reputation-cementing moment, and says just about the only thing he can say: "Well, I didn't get to the punchline."

Contributing editor ERIK HEDEGAARD profiled Joe Rogan in November.



THE FAMILY BUSINESS

Above: Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Mike Love, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Bruce Johnston and Carl Wilson (from left), 1968. Left: Brian Wilson and Love during the *Pet Sounds* sessions, 1966.

Do you regret anything about that night?

"Yeah, I regret that I didn't meditate," he says. "It helps you deal with whatever you're dealing with. I meditate in order to cope with things."

And over the years, he's certainly had a lot to deal with. There's the time, he says, "when my then-wife, Suzanne, mother of two of my children – I'd flipped for her, she really rocked my world – had an affair with cousin Dennis. Out of all the women in the world, you would think..."

What else? Has there been one thing, above all others, that's required meditation to cope with?

His blue eyes darken to gunmetal gray, and the bristles of his beard nearly stand up and quiver. "Yeah," he says. "The major one of those things is being cheated."

Ah, yes, that, of course. It goes way back to the start. Thanks to the Wilson brothers' father, Murry, who was an abusive, conniving piece of work, as well as the Beach Boys' first manager, Love's name didn't make it onto the publishing credits for many of the early hit songs. For instance, on "Wouldn't It Be Nice," Love says he was responsible for the ending couplet "Good night, baby/Sleep tight, baby," not an earthshaking contribution but significant nonetheless, as were the lines that he wrote for "409": "She's real fine, my 409"

and "Giddy-up, giddy-up, 409." And so on, with many other songs, including "California Girls," "Help Me, Rhonda" and "I Get Around."

Brian apparently knew what his father was up to but was too scared of him to do anything about it (Brian Wilson declined to comment for this story). Even so, Love seems to blame both of them, although, on occasion, he does acknowledge how cowed Brian was by his dad. And it doesn't seem to have helped that in 1993, long after Murry's death, Love successfully sued Brian for back songwriting credits, got his name appended to some 35 of the songs, and was awarded at least \$2 million in back royalties. The whole thing still pisses him off. And once he gets started on it, there's no stopping him.

He's in his house now. Waterfalls bubbling, Chef Joaquin tending the stove, wife Jackie overseeing some interior redecorating, Pixie the little cat sleeping in the bed that Pumba the big dog should be sleeping in, and Love lost in the past.

"I wrote every last syllable of the words to 'California Girls,' and when the record came out, it said, 'Brian Wilson' – there was no 'Mike Love,'" he says. "The only thing I didn't write was 'I wish they all could be California girls.' 'Surfin' USA,' too, the big shaftola. Same thing with 'I Get Around.' I came up with 'Round,

round, round, get around, I get around' and redid Brian's lyrics. And nowhere was my name mentioned on the record. Thank you, Brian. Thank you, Murry," he says with a laugh. "And, OK, so then what do I say? My only recourse was legal. But if I stick up for myself, Mike's an asshole. I mean, Brian wanted to settle, but he was in a conservatorship that wouldn't let him. I give him credit for that. But I was cheated and stolen from by my uncle and my cousin, and I don't think it's ever going to be resolved. I mean, how you gonna resolve it?"

In 2005, Love sued Brian once again, this time for "shamelessly misappropriat[ing] Mike

Love's songs, likeness and the Beach Boys trademark" during the promotion of Brian's belatedly released *Smile* album, mainly because a tiny picture of Love with the Beach Boys found its way onto a promotional CD given out in a British newspaper. A judge dismissed all of the claims and said the copyright aspect "bordered on frivolous." But far from suing Brian at every opportunity, shouldn't Love, with all his years of meditation, have been the one to step forward and try to make peace?

He blinks at the question, rolls his eyes and curls his lip.

"When somebody in your family suffers from a mental illness, sometimes it's gone past the opportunity to have a normal relationship," he says. "I mean, there may be a feeling that, ideally, you would like to see peace in the family. And I have nothing but sympathy for Brian. But when you say 'peace,' that would presuppose everything is peaceful. Well, when somebody has chosen a path or direction in life that has led to some pretty unhappy situations, everything isn't all right."

And he's completely serious. It's out of his hands. There's nothing he can do. It's enough to make you bang your head against the statue of Shiva, the Indian god of destruction, that stands in his house, or turn upside down the framed photograph of him, George Harrison, John Lennon, Donovan and others hanging out with the Maharishi back in the day. Then again, in 1968, Love said, "One of the greatest things [about Transcendental Meditation] that interested me was that [the Maharishi] said, 'You don't have to give up your Rolls-Royce and forsake all your pursuits of material pleasures to develop inner-spiritual qualities.' That sounded real good to me." And maybe all the lawsuits could be considered part of those pursuits, too, and thus fully justifiable, at least on an inner-spiritual level.

IN THE MAIN, HE'S A FUN AND engaging, slightly wackadoo-dle fellow. One day he's up in his home studio, playing "Alone on Christmas Day" and a few other songs, most of which he plans to put on a future album titled *Mike Love Not War*, and says, "I call it that because punditry never dies." Many other puns feature his last name – about one song, he says, "A lot of Love went into that one," and then says, "It's a name you can have lots of pun with." He signs his autographs "Love Mike Love." He doesn't care if you groan. He expects you to. He'll never stop.

On the other hand, one can only imagine how frustrating and difficult it was for him at times, having to deal with Brian when Brian was in the throes of his drug-and-alcohol-induced delusions, crazy stuff, such as thinking that songs of his created fires in downtown L.A. Or when Brian was in full-on, persnickety, dictator-of-the-mixing-board mode. Or when Brian decided that surfing songs were passé.

The 2015 movie *Love & Mercy*, made with the cooperation of Brian, shows much of this history. And while Love does not come off especially bad in it, he was, he says, denied an advance screening and told, "Oh, go pay to watch it in the theater." It's just another salvo in a conflict that seems without end. And he has no plans to see the movie. "I don't really need to see it," he says. "I've lived it."

The last time he actually played with Brian was during the 50th-anniversary tour, in 2012. The reunion ended badly, with Love going on to play dates with his version of the Beach Boys and Brian feeling like he'd been fired. "I'm disappointed and can't understand why he doesn't want to tour with Al, David and me," Brian said. "We are out there having so much fun. After all, we are the real Beach Boys."

Jackie says that during the tour, however, seeing Brian and her husband together again was really something else. "They're like two 16-year-old best friends," she says. "Once, Mike and I were giving Brian a ride during peak traffic in L.A., and they were like two boys out in Mom and Dad's car. Brian's like, 'Mike, so what are we gonna do?' and every few minutes, he'd say, 'Are we getting closer? Are we getting closer?' And Mike would say, 'Brian, look at the traffic. I can't go anywhere!' It's hysterical."

"Yeah," says Love. "I was very close to Brian growing up. We'd go to Wednesday-night youth meetings at the Presbyterian church and come home singing. We'd go outside and play the radio in his car, because my dad would throw us out of the house." He smiles at the memory, shaking his head. "So that was the kind of closeness we had as children, and then we wrote all these songs together."

The last job he had before becoming a Beach Boy was working in his dad's sheet-metal factory, cleaning dingleberries off welds, and pumping Standard gas at night. He was 19. He'd gotten his girlfriend pregnant, married her, lived with her in a tiny apartment, had no prospects, evidently felt no calling, thought about going into real estate. "What I might have done," he says, "is find run-down houses that need work, fix them up and resell them, but I didn't have a plan, per se." He grew up in Baldwin Hills, California, an L.A. suburb inland of the 405, but he spent a good bit of time nine miles away, in Hawthorne, hanging out with his music-obsessed cousin Brian and putting an early, fleeting interest in surfing to good use, offering up lyrics like "Surfin' is the only life, the only way for me/Now surf! Surf with me!"

In late 1961, the song "Surfin'" entered the Top 40 on local record charts, hitting a high of Number 75 on the national *Billboard* charts, jump-starting what became known as the California Sound and, in due course, leading to all the hits, confusion, interminable feuds and untimely deaths of the past 54 years. Since 1998, he's been the sole licensee of the Beach Boys name and the only one legally able to tour using it, although they all share in the tour profits. When Jardine once attempted to go out as Al Jardine of the Beach Boys, Love slapped him with a lawsuit and put an end to that.

"I have a sense of humor that's kind of wack, or sometimes bratty, so I get labeled with that, and there goes my image, right down the toilet."

These days, when Jardine and Brian tour together, they tour under Brian's name, with no mention of the Beach Boys anywhere. ("They sound good," Love says. "Al has got a great voice, and his son Matt sings all my parts, but you know in the reviews they say he is singing Carl's part. It is bullshit – they are singing Brian's high falsetto on the original recordings. I don't know why people can't just be truthful and honest and own up to it.")

"Mike has his own vision of what the Beach Boys are, and he doesn't need us anymore," says Jardine. "It's like, 'Wow, that hurts.' I mean, he's obviously a terrific singer, and, oh, gosh, he's just so clever with lyrics, but his strength was his ties to Brian, who is, let's face it, the golden goose of all time. I think he really just wants to be back in the locker room at Dorsey High, being that guy who threw the most touch-downs – he has to have that recognition."

One reason is that many people, when they think of the Beach Boys, rarely think of him, at least not in a good way. It's all about Brian. "Everybody's kind of tried to

dial Mike out and make Brian a deity," says Bruce Johnston, who has played with the Beach Boys since 1965 and is still playing with the band today. "I mean, you get so swept away by Brian's incredible production abilities that people probably overlook the fact that they hear all this through Mike Love's words." Not even Dennis was immune to seeing brother Brian as the end-all, be-all. "Brian Wilson is the Beach Boys," he once said. "He is the band. We're his fucking messengers. He is all of it. Period. We're nothing. He's everything."

That attitude must have rankled Love. And even when Brian was at the height of his musical powers – which have not diminished all that much in the past several decades, as he still writes and records music, releasing three studio albums since 2010 – Love apparently continued to second-guess him, which is what ticks so many people off about him.

In 1966, during the recording of *Pet Sounds*, did you really say what so many people think you said: "Who's gonna hear this shit? The ears of a dog?"

"That's a bunch of bullshit," Love says. "I never said anything like that. All of us worked our asses off on that!"

And what about *Smile*? Brian has said your criticism of its trippy, experimental nature undermined his confidence and caused him to shelve it.

"But he's also said the opposite of that:

'Mike had nothing to do with it,' which is the truth," Love says. "I never said anything bad about any of the tracks. I admit to wanting to make a commercially successful pop record, so I might have complained about some of the lyrics on *Smile*, calling them acid alliteration, which even the guy who wrote them, Van Dyke Parks, couldn't explain. But I wasn't resistant to... I mean, crazy stupid sounds, like animals, farmyard sounds, did all that shit, laying in the bottom of an empty pool, singing up at the mic. I did all that stuff."

Later on, he sighs and rounds up on another, related thought.

"It was a crazy time, people fucked up out of their minds on stuff," he says. "You do a lot of pot, LSD, cocaine, you name it, paranoia runs rampant, so, yes, Brian could have become extra-, ultrasensitive to attitudes, you know, body language, or whatever. My psyche is mainly... except for the, maybe, moments of true frustration or anger or whatever, saying things in a way that's been misconstrued. Maybe I'm cast in that light, which is unfortunate

but maybe deserving. But can I be responsible? Should Mike Love take a beating for Brian's paranoid schizophrenia?" (Brian is diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder.)

Love continues, "My contribution was positive lyrics. Why the fuck should I be the scapegoat and the fall guy for that other stuff?" He says a while later, "*Smile*...that's a misnomer if I ever heard of one."

And that is about all Love will admit to. "He's reinventing his role in the band," says Jardine. "He feels it has not been [properly] expressed, so he's reinventing most of the things that are important to the songs he loves to perform."

The first time Love sued Brian was in 1992, for defamation regarding how Brian made him appear in his autobiography. His main complaint revolved around how little credit he was given for the songs he and Brian wrote together. "They disparaged me," he says. "It was like I hardly did anything and Brian did everything. It's like kind of trying to erase somebody from history or create another reality." The publisher, HarperCollins, settled the suit for \$1.5 million. Love has never read the book, which thus allows him to say things like, "At the risk of being facetious, it's my favorite book I never read, because what books have you ever read that paid you a million dollars?" He means this to be amusing, but it doesn't exactly come off that way. Crass, is more like it. He does acknowledge this, saying, "I guess a lot of people don't understand I have a sense of humor that's kind of wack, or different, or sometimes bratty, so I get labeled with that and there goes my image, right down the toilet." But it doesn't slow him down any and probably never will. To the school of himself, he is totally true.

ONE AFTERNOON IN Lake Tahoe, he and Jackie are sitting down for lunch, about to dig into some pretty tasty quinoa burgers. Jackie's 22 years younger than Love and, because she's been married to him for more than two decades, can say, "I'm wife number six, but it's OK, because I've beaten the cumulative average." How long was the shortest marriage?

"Sue Oliver," says Love. "She was a great hang, but she was a fortune hunter. Lasted maybe six months." After that, he gives a rundown on the rest of the exes. One marriage was annulled. Another was with "a Mexican mistake who liked alcohol and

pot better than meditation and me." Suzanne, the one who really rocked his world and had an affair with cousin Dennis, he says, once hired Manson Family murderess Susan Atkins as a babysitter, "which was kind of the last straw for me." Another wife he met at a meditation gathering, but then she "became overly fond of another meditative fellow, who was living in a com-

that's the story of it, right? The value of the music, and what it's meant to so many people." He shifts his weight, looking a little sad and uncomfortable, maybe thinking of something he'd said earlier. "Oh, man, going through the past like this," he'd said. "It's like digging up a rock and all these bugs are under it."

Most of those bugs, of course, have Brian's name on them, leading one to wonder what he might say to Brian if Brian magically appeared here right now?

He and Jackie are just finishing lunch and pondering some fine-looking gluten-free carrot cake. "What do you mean?" he says.

How would you greet him? "Oh, OK, well..."

Jackie speaks up. "Let me be Brian," she says.

Love looks alarmed. "No, no, no, no," he says.

But it's too late. Jackie has hopped onto her chair and is towering over her husband, both magnifying the actual height difference of the two men by about three feet and reducing the actual distance between them by about 450 miles. She puts on a deep voice. She's Brian now.

"Mike, hey, Mike!" she says.

Mike is held speechless. Finally, he says, "What?"

"That's what you would say?" Jackie asks.

He laughs, awkwardly, and gives it his best shot. "Hi, Brian, what's happening?"

Deep voice. "Hey, Mike. I found you. Ya know, dude, what are we gonna do? I miss you, Mike."

Love drops out of the moment. "Brian probably would say that. If he had the ability." He giggles nervously.

Jackie isn't satisfied. She gets serious with him. "I don't want to make you cry, but would you greet him as being your cousin and collaborator in music first, or just as a collaborator? OK, so I'm Brian. You're seeing me. Express the personal part of it. What would you say?"

Many, many seconds go by.

"I'd probably say, 'I love you,'" he says, moisture gathering in the corners of his eyes. "And I love what we did together. And let's do it again." But then he gives his head a shake, narrows his eyes, any wetness there drying up, frowns and once again gives voice to what no amount of meditation can ever smooth over. "I've been ostracized," he says quietly. "Vilified. In other words, fucked with." He looks around for agreement. When none is forthcoming, he says, "Pass me the water, please," and, in such a way, lets it be known that some things will never change.



ROAD DOG
At 74, Love still plays more than 100 shows a year.

pound I bought in Santa Barbara." And so on. As well, he can lay claim to eight biological children, ranging in ages from 20 to mid-fifties, although the early, horndog vagaries of his life may have resulted in at least one more.

And yet here he is, having survived it all. The biggest asshole in rock & roll history? No, not really. Egotistical? Without a doubt. Obtuse? He can be. Tortured soul? He'd like no one to think so. A Beach Boys history revisionist? To some degree, perhaps, which may be reflected in his memoir, due out this fall. Angry at Brian? Passive-aggressively, at the least. Mainly, he's turned out just the way he has, telling puns, living in this massive house, owning a Bentley and a Maserati, still thankful that the Maharishi did not frown upon material possessions, and still performing like not a day has gone by since 1963.

"Despite the obvious dysfunctionality of the Beach Boys as a group of human beings," he says later on, "to be able to take this music – all of these foibles and trials and tribulations, all of the unhappiness and self-destruction, the self-indulgent behavior – but if you take the music,

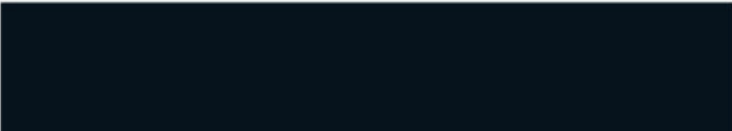


The largest
polygamist town
in America is
run by a madman
in jail. Now he's
started a civil war

A Mormon cult's Last Stand

By Jesse Hyde

ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN MCCABE



On a January morning in

Phoenix, Willie Jessop enters the courtroom through a side door, nods at the lawyers and saunters up to the witness stand. He's a big man – six feet three, well over 200 pounds – and, as usual, is dressed in black. He glances at the jury, a faint smile crossing his lips. In the past, Jessop has been the staunchest defender of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a polygamist offshoot of Mormonism. When he used to take the stand to explain their way of life, a few sister wives in pastel prairie dresses would always be on hand to show support. But today, they're gone. That's because Jessop, the former spokesman for the FLDS and one-time bodyguard to its jailed prophet, Warren Jeffs, has turned against his church. He's not here to defend the FLDS; he's here to take it down.

The prosecutor asks why Jessop would turn on FLDS leadership to become a key witness for the Department of Justice. Jessop's face reddens as he leans forward. "Because those sons of bitches were raping girls in Texas, and they knew it and I knew it," he says, "and that battle is still raging today."

It's Week Two in a federal trial currently underway against the adjoining towns of Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah, and increasingly disturbing and bizarre revelations are coming to light. Known collectively as Short Creek, the two towns have a total population of about 8,000, the majority FLDS, making the community the largest polygamist enclave in America. For generations, the FLDS leadership has had total control over this desert outpost on the



The Prophet

Warren Jeffs with some of his 80 or so wives. He is now serving a life sentence in Texas.

edge of the Grand Canyon, selecting the mayors, the city council and even the town marshals without any problem. But in recent years, the DOJ has been investigating allegations that the two towns have been violating residents' civil rights, allowing the church to use public officials to run members who left the faith – "apostates" in FLDS parlance – out of town, denying utility hookups and even spying on citizens. The trial is slated to end in late February or early March and, if the feds are successful, criminal charges could follow, helping to end FLDS control over Short Creek.

But the FLDS isn't expected to go without a fight. Once a fringe religious community seemingly stuck in time, Short Creek has fallen into a spell under its prophet, Warren Jeffs – a spindly, hollow-eyed man who allegedly runs the town despite serving a life sentence in Texas for multiple convictions of child rape. Jeffs has banned all TV and the Internet in Short Creek. His private security force roams the streets in SUVs with blacked-out windows, enforcing church discipline and tailing anyone who passes through town. FLDS members who disobey his word are banished.

But not everyone is following Jeffs' orders anymore. Jessop is part of a growing band of outcasts numbering in the hundreds who have refused to leave town, and the rising tension between the faithful and these exiles has pushed Short Creek to the brink of civil war. Former church members claim they have been driven off the road, seen FLDS children peeing on their lawns and found dead animals with their throats slit left on their porches. In September, the office window of a victim's advocate was shot out. A week later, someone blew up an apostate's truck. There are even rumors that Jeffs is trying to create a master race, loyal only to him, through a secret breeding program known as the "seed bearers." "This is a community that has been controlled by a madman now sitting in a jail in Texas," says Sam Brower, a private investigator who worked on the Jeffs case and is the author of *Prophet's Prey*, a penetrating look inside the FLDS. "That's the really scary thing about this. This guy is crazy. The more power Warren Jeffs loses, the more desperate he becomes."

As Jeffs' former bodyguard, Jessop is one of the DOJ's most important witnesses, a key to taking down the FLDS. And today, he's spilling the church's secrets.

During a break in the trial in Phoenix, Jessop sighs – he may have helped light a fuse no one can control. "How far is this going to go?" he says. "That's what's got everyone on pins and needles. Could it end in a Waco or in a Jonestown? I hope not, but I don't think we've seen the climax of this thing."

JESSE HYDE wrote about marijuana kingpin Clay Roueche in 2013.

FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, few outsiders even knew of Short Creek's existence. A remote polygamist town off a two-lane desert highway, it was the sort of place where no one locked their doors or even built fences. Boys rode their horses bareback down dusty unmarked streets, and girls in lavender prairie dresses walked arm in arm to church, humming Mormon hymns.

And then Warren Jeffs came to power in the late Nineties, and everything

wanted list for multiple counts of sexually assaulting minors, and went on the run with his favorite wife, Naomi (code name: 91). With the help of Jessop, who ran the church's security force – called the God Squad by detractors – Jeffs communicated through coded letters and burner phones and shuttled between the church's "houses of hiding" scattered throughout the West (in particular, he often visited his favored brides at the compound in Texas). In August 2006, he was arrested during a routine traffic stop on the



"The more power Warren Jeffs loses, the more desperate he becomes. That's the really scary thing about this."

changed. The ambitious, twisted son of the previous FLDS prophet, Jeffs took control and became obsessed with the idea of "perfect obedience." He started kicking people out of Short Creek that he deemed sinners: young men who came to be known as Lost Boys, teenage girls he considered too rebellious and men no longer "worthy of priesthood," reassigning their wives and children to loyalists he felt he could trust.

Beginning in 2002, he came under investigation for child rape in Utah. He then began evading authorities while marrying off teenage girls to the sect's leadership. He also ordered the construction of a new FLDS compound, the Yearning for Zion ranch, in the West Texas desert. In May 2006, he landed on the FBI's 10 most-

outskirts of Las Vegas, carrying 16 cell-phones, three wigs and \$56,000 in cash in the lining of a suitcase.

Convinced God would liberate him from his prison cell in Utah, he had his wives record his sermons when he called them, to be played for his followers in Short Creek. The end of the world was coming and they must be ready.

For a time, with various cases against him falling apart, it seemed like Jeffs might actually be released. And then in the spring of 2008, responding to a complaint, Texas police breached the gates of the FLDS compound in West Texas, seizing evidence that resulted in the temporary removal of more than 400 children. The raid made international headlines and sparked the largest child-custody battle in U.S. history.

Suddenly, news trucks from around the country were descending on Texas and Short Creek to talk about Jeffs' taste for young girls and what life was really like inside the secretive cult. In the meantime, investigators had uncovered evidence that Jeffs had taken several teen brides and married one girl who was only 12, consummating their marriage on a temple bed. Jeffs was eventually extradited from Utah to Texas and in August 2011 was sentenced to life in prison, plus 20 years.

PREVIOUS PAGE: PHOTOGRAPHS IN ILLUSTRATION BY DOUGLAS C. PIZAC; ERIN SIEGAL/REDUX; COURTESY OF SAM BROWER. THIS PAGE: LAURA RAUCH/AP IMAGES

Yet despite being in jail, Jeffs was still the prophet and determined to keep his stranglehold over Short Creek, where the majority of his estimated 10,000 followers lived. But the town was changing. During Jeffs' years on the run, an obscure legal case made its way through the courts, challenging FLDS control over something called the United Effort Plan. Created by the town elders in the 1940s, the UEP was a charitable trust designed to allow FLDS members to live communally and keep outsiders at bay. All FLDS members

SHORT CREEK SITS AT THE base of towering vermilion cliffs, a few miles from a rusted collection of trailers occupied by meth tweakers and end-times preppers. Hemmed in by the Grand Canyon and a winding mountain pass known as Hurricane Hill, it is one of the most isolated places in America, bracketed by red-rock mountains on one side and a dusty expanse on the other.

It's a chilly November morning, and as I drive through town, the divisions be-

lected a small number of men who were allowed to drive to a nearby Costco to stock up on food and deliver it to members.

I stop at the apostate-owned Merry Wives Cafe, which is one of the few places in town to get a cup of coffee, to meet Isaac Wyler. Other than Jessop, Wyler may be the most hated man in town among the FLDS. A farmer with a ruddy complexion, he grew up here in the FLDS, although, like many in the lower echelons, he never took more than one wife. He was always wary of Jeffs, but the last straw came when he heard his prophet pray for the execution of his neighbor Jason Williams. Not long afterward, Wyler says, Williams' truck blew up in his driveway. Wyler went online, started researching the church and began secretly recording Jeffs' sermons and leaking them to law enforcement. In 2004, Wyler was kicked out for reasons that were never explained to him.

He was told to leave his property and hand over his farm. He refused and says he has since suffered constant harassment: His fences were torn down, his tires slashed nearly every week. "They started leaving dead animals on my property," he says in a wry desert drawl. "Chickens, cats, dogs, ducks, you name it. They'd splatter their heads all over my porch, hang them

with their throats slit."

Today, Wyler works with the accountant in charge of the UEP to help those exiled by Jeffs' return to their homes, which have sometimes been taken over by FLDS members. The state's legal backing comes from a 2014 judge's order mandating the eviction of FLDS members who refuse to comply with the UEP. This is the true front line in the battle for Short Creek, and it has law enforcement on edge. Wyler tells me he's carried out more than 100 evictions in the past year alone, and the threat of violence is constant. A few weeks ago, he says, an FLDS woman pulled a knife on a member of his team during an eviction. He also claims the town police show up and tell him he's trespassing, even though he's carrying out state law. Wyler has begun asking deputies from nearby Mohave County to accompany him for his safety.

Wyler takes me to a property he recently vacated: a large brick house with stately Greek columns. Wyler says that when he starts the process of eviction, the FLDS sometimes sends "guards" over to take up temporary residence in the home. These squatters are usually women and children, and if possible, Wyler's relatives. "It's a sort of psychological warfare they're trying to pull," he says. "They call me a traitor, say I'm turning on my own."

He points to a closet where the water heater should be. It's missing. He explains

gave ownership of their property to the church-controlled trust, on top of paying a percentage of their incomes. By the time Jeffs took over the church, in 2002, the FLDS owned nearly all of the land in Short Creek, which meant he could kick out whoever he wanted from their homes, a power he regularly abused.

But that all changed when several Lost Boys sued the church in 2004 for kicking them out. "Answer them nothing," Jeffs told his lawyers. Any kind of response, he reasoned, would be an acknowledgment of the unholy power of the government. As far as legal strategies go, it was a disaster: Ignoring the lawsuit put the church's assets in jeopardy. The state stripped Jeffs of his control over the trust, eventually revising it to benefit anyone who'd contributed time or money to building the community. Soon, apostates started trickling back into Short Creek, taking up residence in their former homes. "Leave them alone, severely," Jeffs instructed, which meant don't shop at their stores, speak with them or even wave while passing in the street. By the time Jeffs was sentenced in 2011, the apostates were returning in droves. The town was bitterly divided. Brothers and sisters, cousins, nieces and nephews were forced to choose sides.

The battle for Short Creek had begun.

tween the FLDS and nonbelievers are apparent. Church members have built tall fences around their homes, making them look like mini-fortresses, and affixed Zion signs above their doors to separate themselves from the rest of town. Every once in a while, I can peek beyond a fence and spot a little boy playing in his long pants and shirtsleeves, or a girl in a prairie dress. Because pretty much all games have been banned, "fun" amounts to something like jumping back and forth over a large rock. I see a few women, sister wives presumably, but mostly the streets are empty, other than the large SUVs and pickup trucks with darkly tinted windows that rumble through town.

Since the FLDS started losing ground to the apostates, it shuttered almost all church-owned businesses, especially those open to the public, which included the pizza place and the only grocery store in town. While I could have patronized any of those places as a "gentile," or nonbeliever, they were off-limits to apostates, who could be threatened with arrest for trespassing if they so much as walked through the door. Now, only FLDS members can enter the few remaining church-owned shops in town, and they must call ahead and use a password. To further limit contact with outsiders, the church had also se-

Blood Feud

Far left: Jeffs appearing in court in Las Vegas in 2006. Left: Jessop was once Jeffs' right-hand man but has now become a top witness for the prosecution.



that when the state takes possession of a house, they often find it stripped of anything of value – the water heater, the furnace, the light fixtures – before the state can sell it. “Sometimes you can’t find a doorknob,” he says.

“So why don’t you report this to the police?” I ask.

“The town marshals?” he says, laughing. “I have. Nothing happens. Heck, they’re probably the ones doing it.”

Next, Wyler takes me by a tent encampment within the town limits that some have taken to calling Lyleville, a not-so-subtle jab at Jeffs’ brother Lyle, the current bishop of Short Creek. Wyler explains that the properties carry years of unpaid taxes. A state judge empowered the UEP to work with the FLDS members so they can stay in their homes if they pay their back taxes and a \$100-a-month occupancy fee. But Jeffs’ code of silence still rules. So instead of cooperating with the state in any way, the evicted have set up what looks like a U.N. refugee camp surrounded by 10-foot-tall metal walls. It’s hard to see what’s

he eventually became the principal of Alta Academy, the church’s private school for the 90 or so families who lived in the city and secretly practiced polygamy, like the family in HBO’s series *Big Love*. Tall with a pale complexion, Jeffs wore thick Coke-bottle glasses and spoke in a flat nasal monotone that rarely moved an octave.

Former students have described Jeffs as an exacting taskmaster who had little tolerance for those who broke his rules. “Perfect obedience requires perfect faith,” he taught. Jeffs would sneak up behind students in class, grabbing them by the neck and whispering things like, “Are you keeping sweet or do you need to be punished?” But there was nothing more terrifying than walking up the stairs to Jeffs’ office. For some students, the punishment that awaited was a beating with a yardstick, and for some the horrors were far worse. One of Jeffs’ nephews would later sue his uncle for raping him repeatedly when he was between five and seven years old.

In the late Nineties, Jeffs started spending more time in Short Creek. His father

protect Short Creek’s leadership from rival polygamists who had created a hit list of state sects. By the time he got a call from Jeffs in 2004, Jessop had worked his way up to become head of the God Squad – and wouldn’t hesitate to give his life in order to protect the church.

“Can you meet me?” Jeffs asked.

It was a Saturday morning and the townsmen had gathered at the meeting-house to get their assignments for work projects around the community, which were mandatory under Jeffs’ rule. Jessop met Jeffs in the building’s kitchen, where the prophet arrived with a few of his wives. He looked worried. “He was concerned about his ability to leave the meeting alive,” Jessop recalls. Jessop unholstered his .357 Magnum and stood behind the curtain onstage while Jeffs walked to the lectern. “The work of God is a benevolent dictatorship,” Jeffs said to the nearly 2,000 people gathered before him. “It is not a democracy.” He read the names of 21 “master deceivers,” which included four of his brothers and the mayor of Colorado City. These men, he said, would all have to go. And then he slipped out a side door. “It was a shot straight through the church,” Jessop says. “That was when it changed from a church to a cartel.”

As prophet, Jeffs’ father had instituted bizarre new rules to test the loyalty of his followers, such as no one could wear red or drive a red car, because Jesus would return in red. But Jeffs took it to a new level. He ordered everyone to turn in their guns, and then their tools. Holidays were banned and books burned.

If Jessop had misgivings about any of this, he kept it to himself. “I very much believed in my religion,” Jessop tells me. “I believed in our society. I believed in our ethics. Back then, a lot of these charges against Warren, I just didn’t believe.”

And so, Jessop did whatever he could to protect the prophet and church leaders. When Jeffs wanted to meet with one of his wives, Jessop says he secured the perimeter, sometimes shivering outside the compound walls until Jeffs was done.

“It’s pretty hard realizing now what he was doing at the time inside, because I didn’t know,” Jessop says. “I didn’t coordinate who was inside with him. I’m out there freezing my butt off in a snowstorm. I would’ve given my life in a heartbeat for him, and he’s inside with little girls.”

After Jeffs’ 2006 capture, he was tried in Utah and sentenced to 10 years to life as an accomplice in the rape of an underage girl. In 2010, that conviction was overturned on trial technicalities, but the state extradited him to Texas, where he was facing more-serious charges stemming from the raid of the church’s Yearning for Zion ranch – allegations that would eventually land him in jail for life.

Jessop went to Texas to review that evidence, trying to help build Jeffs’ defense.

“Perfect obedience requires perfect faith,” Jeffs said to his students. “Are you keeping sweet or do you need to be punished?”

going on inside, but through the slats we can see a cluster of trailers and huge white tents. Before long, snow will dust Canaan Mountain and temperatures will plummet to near freezing. “I can’t believe they would rather have women and little kids sleep out here than cooperate with us,” Wyler says.

HOW A PLACE LIKE SHORT Creek even exists is rooted in early Mormon history. The mainstream church – the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or LDS – banned polygamy in 1890, but some Mormons kept practicing it in secret for years, sending prominent members like Mitt Romney’s great-grandfather to places such as Mexico to start polygamist colonies. When the church finally decided to excommunicate polygamist families, they went underground. In the 1930s, several of these clans established Short Creek.

Jeffs was born in 1955, the son of Rulon Jeffs, who later became the FLDS prophet. Born premature and near death, Jeffs was so small, it’s said he came home in a shoe box, but his survival was a sign that he was God’s chosen one, his mother insisted. As one of his father’s favorite sons, he lived a life a world apart from the kids in Short Creek.

Growing up in his family’s well-appointed compound in suburban Salt Lake City, 400 miles north of Short Creek,

had become the prophet in 1986, but a series of strokes had left him mentally incapacitated, and over time, Jeffs became his father’s most trusted counselor, and eventually his mouthpiece. At a meeting shortly after his father’s death, Jeffs sat near the podium in the FLDS chapel, peering down at the congregation with a large portrait of his father propped up on a chair beside him. He explained that Rulon wasn’t dead at all – he’d been “renewed,” or reincarnated, and was standing before them. In other words, Jeffs was Rulon, which is why it was perfectly acceptable for him to marry his dad’s wives. Jessop, by then the prophet’s head bodyguard, fell in line.

Jessop had grown up in Short Creek and remembers it as an idyllic desert town – 5 square miles bordered by sandstone cliffs where everyone knew one another. He hunted jack rabbits in the mountains, attended church dances and ice cream socials and, like all the other boys, participated in volunteer work projects (constructing barns, putting in water systems) without question or complaint, essentially building the town. Because the FLDS had so many children, it had a large and free labor force, allowing it to build big businesses, from dairies to hay farms to construction companies.

But as he grew older, Jessop began to learn about the sacrifices required to maintain the town’s way of life. At about 17, he was asked to become a bodyguard to



Big Love

(1) Brick walls surrounding the FLDS homes in Short Creek. (2) Children watch as crews clear mud and debris from the streets after a flash flood in September that killed 13 people. (3) A chimney on Jeffs' home.

But he came across something that stopped him in his tracks. A 12-year-old girl named Merrienne Jessop, Willie's niece, had told investigators that during her marriage ceremony in the YFZ temple, Jeffs had laid her down on a ceremonial bed and had intercourse with her while some of his other wives watched. The state also had an audiotape of the encounter.

Jessop was incredulous. His niece's statement made reference to "the law of Sarah," the FLDS doctrine that allows for plural marriage, though here it had been grossly misinterpreted to cater to Jeffs' sexual perversions. It was so outlandish, Jessop figured the police were lying. He met with some of the young wives at one of the church's houses of hiding, in New Bruntsfield, Texas. To be alone, they walked

out to an orchard behind the house.

"What's this law-of-Sarah stuff?" Jessop asked, expecting the girls to say they had no idea. Instead, they confirmed that Jeffs had raped Merrienne, while they watched.

Jessop felt like the floor had gone out from underneath him. He asked his driver to take him for a ride. After only a few minutes, Jessop asked to pull over, and he got out and threw up. "My whole world came apart," he says. "Everything I thought I knew was turned upside down."

Jessop flew back to Short Creek and confronted Lyle Jeffs. He told Lyle he wanted the authorization to go public

with what he'd found out about Warren. Instead, Jessop says, Lyle refused. "At that point, I knew I was done," Jessop says.

Jessop went home and told his family, unsure of what they might say. Most FLDS members, when faced with a choice between family and the church, had chosen the church. All around their town were broken families where the husband had been exiled from the community and the wives and children had stayed behind. But Jessop was lucky.

His wives and children stood by him, deciding to leave the church with him.

The retribution was fast and fierce. "I had pieces of concrete slung through the front window of my house," he says. "I had my office raided, my vehicles raided. They said, 'God is going to kill and curse you, Willie. He's going to send fire from heaven and burn you.' That was a direct statement from one of my own family."

For a while, Jessop carried his gun with him wherever he went. And then he de-

cided God was on his side, and he didn't need it.

"I think the best way to look at this is organized crime, not religion," Jessop says. "This town is basically run by one family, and everyone here has always done their bidding. They've been able to hide behind the First Amendment, claiming religious rights to protect what they do. When you see it for what it really is, the Mafia, everything starts to make sense."

Like Jeffs himself, Jessop is a divisive character around town. Perhaps because he once headed the God Squad, there is some lingering distrust that Jessop has truly switched sides. The fact that he is still in contact with Lyle Jeffs, the de facto FLDS leader, only deepens the suspicion.

"Willie will always be Willie," says Brower, the private investigator who was instrumental in bringing Jeffs down. "He hasn't changed from when he was with Warren. He says he didn't know about the sex? Of course he knew. He was enabling it. Other than Warren Jeffs, he's the most corrupt guy in Short Creek."

Jessop knows people like Brower don't trust him, but he says that's of minor concern. "I get it, I was on one side one day, and now I'm on the other," Jessop tells me. "But that's this whole town. One day your neighbor won't talk to you because he thinks you're an apostate bound for hell, and the next he's calling you saying, 'Hey, how do I get out of this thing?'"

SPEND ANY TIME IN SHORT Creek and it's hard to escape the feeling that things are getting darker and scarier. When I visit, walls are going up everywhere we look. Passing by the meetinghouse – the Walmart-size church at the edge of town – Isaac Wyler points to a big cement wall; again, too high to see inside. The church was once the gathering place for the community. Now, either to prevent apostates from seeing what's going on inside, or just to put them in their place, the nonbelievers can't so much as look at the church; the only thing visible is the roof.

At this point, seemingly nothing can be done to repair the fractured town. Case in point: In September, a devastating flash flood ripped through town, killing 13 members of the church, including 10 children. It was one of the worst natural disasters in Utah history. At first, it seemed the tragedy could unite families. Nonbelievers and the faithful worked long into the night, digging through waist-high mud in search of those who had been swept away. The FLDS leadership even begrudgingly accepted help and donations from gentiles. But a few days into the search, the FLDS announced it didn't want any further help, and anyone who didn't belong to the church would not be welcomed at funerals, even if they were

family members of the victims. Many of the dead were secretly buried in order to ensure no outsiders were present.

From prison, Jeffs is further dividing the town by building a cell of hardened zealots that he has christened the United Order, essentially an elite group within the faith. All over town, Wyler points out the homes of United Order members as we drive. They're easy to spot: an olive wreath above the Zion sign, and more often than not, a bunkhouse or a cargo container in the yard.

"What's that for?" I ask Wyler.

worthy to live with her husband. They were no longer members of the FLDS, but could still live in the community and turn their paychecks in to the church. "But we wouldn't be able to talk to each other or to anybody, we wouldn't be able to talk to our kids or see them," Thomas says.

Eventually, Thomas and his wife separated and left Short Creek. Now living in the Salt Lake area and working in IT support, Thomas tells me his wife and children are hoping the Jeffs brothers will allow them to return to the community. He calls his wife and children every day,



Jeffs' Unholy Legacy

Above: Jeffs' ritualistic altar bed from his YFZ compound in Texas. Right: With his bride Merrienne Jessop, who was 12 at the time, in 2006. She is still married to him.



He says that if you're married to a United Order bride, you can't sleep under the same roof. "So the men get put outside," he adds. Jeffs has made all marriages null and void, explaining to the women of Short Creek that they are property of the priesthood. Even sleeping with your spouse is now considered adultery.

For those who decide to finally leave, the road can be harrowing. Ben Thomas and his family were exiled from the community three years ago, even though his wife and seven of his eight children had been in the United Order. "It was just, 'OK, this is another test, you have to pass this and move forward,'" Thomas tells me. "You live there 40-some-odd years, and if you screw up in the last year, that really sucks."

Gripped with guilt, his wife had begun writing confession letters to Lyle Jeffs, informing him of her perceived sins. Not long afterward, he told her that she wasn't

but they refuse to talk to him. "Some days I get on the speakerphone and tell them I love them," Thomas says. "I get about 10 seconds, and then the phone hangs up."

Like other people I talk to in Short Creek, Thomas is especially concerned about the rise of something called the seed bearers – perhaps the most disturbing of commands from the jailed FLDS prophet. According to former members who still have family inside, Jeffs has decreed that only men of a "royal bloodline" can reproduce, and only with women selected to the United Order. According to rumors, these men (there are said to be 15) are the seed bearers. To have a child,

women must eat a special detox diet and apply to Jeffs in prison. Husbands are made to watch these breeding sessions, in which seed bearers wear a hood, and a sheet is placed between the man and woman during intercourse to keep their identities secret. Any children born from these unions are put into hiding, likely at the FLDS network of secret compounds scattered throughout the West. They then become property of the church, with no knowledge of the identity of their parents. Several former members tell me they think Jeffs is trying to create a master race, loyal only to him.

Thomas' worst fear is that his oldest daughter, who has returned to Short Creek, will become a United Order bride. "At my low point, I was sitting there with a gun on my bed," he tells me. "The pain is quite unbearable."

It's a refrain I hear again and again. Virtually everyone I talk to in Short Creek knows at least one exiled family member who has committed suicide. Jessop says he has a brother who killed himself and an uncle who recently drove himself off Hurricane Hill after Jeffs dissolved his marriage and reassigned his family. Jessop tells me there were two to three suicides a month in the fall. These are the true casualties of the war over the town.

"They call them Lost Boys, but it's more than that," he says. "It's lost children, it's lost mothers, it's lost women, it's lost men. It's a lot of hurt, and the magnitude of it's beyond my ability to even describe."

BACK IN PHOENIX, THE LAWYER for the city of Hildale is trying to take Willie Jessop apart on the stand, pursuing a line of questioning that seems designed to get the jury to wonder if they can trust him. After all, here's a guy who repeatedly lied for the church. Is he telling the truth now? But Jessop holds his ground. "I never left the church," he says. "The church left me."

As strong as Jessop's testimony is, there's no telling what the jury will decide in the next few weeks. If the jury rules in favor of the DOJ, it is likely that Colorado City and Hildale would go into receivership, or possibly federal control. Nearby Hurricane, Utah, would take over police calls on the Utah side of the border, while police in Kingman, Arizona, would respond to calls coming from Arizona, even though it's a five-hour drive.

During my time in Short Creek, I tried to talk to FLDS members to get their perspective on what was happening in town. I stopped by the Jeffs' family compound, which takes up an entire block, but no one answered.

Hoping to meet with an official, I stopped by city hall, noticing the flag was at half-mast. When I asked why, I learned that it had been that way since Jeffs' incar-

ceration, perhaps the most powerful symbol I'd seen of who really runs Short Creek. Inside Hildale City Hall, I was met by an FLDS woman wearing a green prairie dress and an elaborate updo, who worked as a secretary. She told me the town manager wasn't there but took down my name and number. She seemed nervous to be talking to me, and eager to see me leave.

Eventually, I reached Blake Hamilton, a Salt Lake City attorney who represents the city of Hildale in the civil rights case brought by the DOJ. "What's happening here is very alarming," he tells me. "The federal government is doing exactly what they claim my client is doing, and that is discriminating on the basis of religion."

Hamilton says that contrary to stereotype, not all of the FLDS answer blindly to Warren Jeffs and that not all city officials belong to the church. What's at stake, Hamilton argues, is whether a town can

"Jeffs may take it to violence – he'd like nothing more than to go out in a blaze of glory like some Old Testament story."

govern itself. "This case has pretty far-reaching implications," says Jeff Matura, a Phoenix attorney representing Colorado City. "Because it's an effort by the federal government to eradicate a religion it doesn't like. If it happens in a community in northern Arizona with 10,000 people, it could happen anywhere."

There are rumors the FLDS plans to abandon the town, possibly spreading to compounds in Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas. If it does, it would be following a pattern established by Mormon founder Joseph Smith. Polygamy pushed Smith's flock from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake City. In both places, they tried to establish a theocratic society they called Zion, until it collapsed. The FLDS appears to be following the same script.

But it seems that no matter where they go, the faithful will continue to answer to Jeffs, seeking meaning in his apocalyptic pronouncements. Even as a boy, Jeffs saw himself as messianic, believing the blood of Christ coursed through him. Ironically, his lasting legacy may be the destruction of the very cult that gave him birth. Criminal charges against the remaining FLDS leadership (nine church elders are already in prison with Jeffs) could possibly follow, depending on the jury's verdict. "He imploded this religion," Jessop says.

While the DOJ has alleged that Jeffs continues to run the cult from jail, there's

not much they can do to stop him. On the stand, Jessop says that Jeffs would send encrypted letters to Short Creek that only three of his wives could decode, and these orders were then passed on to the faithful. His wives also visited him while wearing watches equipped with recording devices, taping his commands. And when all else failed, he relayed instructions through his battery of well-paid defense attorneys, financed by the tithing of his humble followers.

Still, despite his status as prophet, Jeffs lives in humiliating conditions compared with his former life. He spends almost all of his time alone in a cell deep in the pine forests of Palestine, Texas. Segregated from the general population, he never interacts with other inmates, even during the rare times he leaves his cell to walk around the yard. Mostly, he sits alone, reading letters from his followers and scribbling revelations. At one point, he was praying so much that open wounds began to fester on his knees, and prison officials had to chain him to the wall, forcing him to stand.

Not long ago, Brower visited him in prison to assist in a deposition. Stooped and graying, Jeffs was no longer the towering figure who had once inspired fear in his followers. His skin now ghostly pale, he looked weak and feeble. Jeffs refused to answer a single question investigators asked that day, Brower says, quietly asserting his Fifth Amendment rights again and again.

"He's got a boatload of mental illnesses," Brower says. "I believe he's schizophrenic, that he really hears voices."

And yet, Jeffs' power over his followers in Short Creek remains absolute.

"The control he has is monumental," Brower says. "I still worry deeply that he'll take it to some kind of violence, some kind of bloodshed, because what does he have to lose? He's in prison, and I think he'd like nothing more than to go out in a blaze of glory like some Old Testament story."

Not long after my last visit to Short Creek, I hear about an alarming prophecy that Jeffs has recently issued from jail. The end of the world is coming, and soon. It's a prophecy he has made many times before. In fact, he had once predicted the world would end at the dawn of the new millennium, and had selected a few families to go out into a field known as Berry Knoll on New Year's Eve in 1999 to be "lifted up" as the pestilence and plagues rolled forth upon the land. FLDS apostates still laugh about it.

But it turns out Jeffs had been right back then, he just hadn't realized one important detail: Man's calendar is 16 years different from God's. The world will in fact end as Jeffs had predicted, and God has even given him a date: April 2016.

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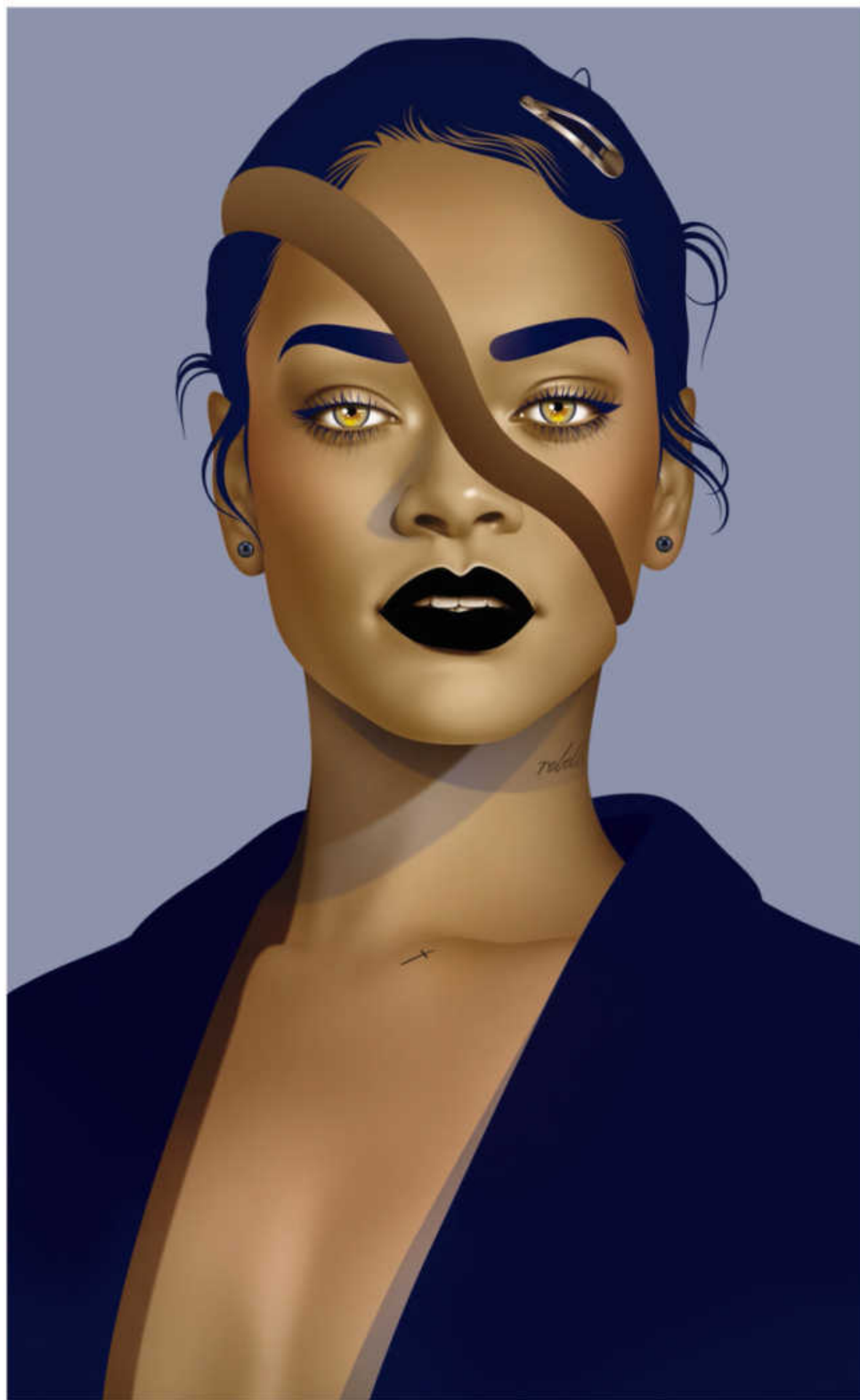


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Reviews

"I come fluttering in from Neverland,
Time can never stop me, no, no, no, no.
I know you've tried to,
I come riding in on a pale white horse."
—RIHANNA, "Consideration"



Rihanna Finds a Deeper Kind of Pop

After a three-year break between releases, the singer gets rawer than ever



Rihanna

Anti Westbury Road/Roc Nation

★★★★

BY BRITTANY SPANOS

For much of 2015, repeated delays and a lack of solid information made Rihanna's *Anti* feel like pop's mythical creature. Now that we know it's real, we can hear the singer's eighth LP for what it is: her rawest release ever, and something like a rejection of her Top 40 past. After years of consistently hit-driven LPs – from her 2005 debut up through 2012's *Unapologetic* – Rihanna has become an album artist with noticeable anti-pop leanings.

Where previous albums were built around the peaks of a few clear singles, *Anti*'s songs flow together like a rich, downtempo dream (see the excellent mid-disc run of after-hours grooves from "Desperado" to "Woo" to "Needed Me"). On "James Joint," she assures us that she'd "rather be smoking weed/Whenever we breathe," in her most dulcet tones. Once there were two Rihannas – the glamorous queen of the radio

Reviews

and the blunt-puffing rebel seen on Snapchat and Instagram. Here, she's the carefree island girl of our collective fantasies all the way through.

Rihanna's voice on *Anti* is as unfiltered and emotionally direct as her lyrics, in contrast to the pristine vocals heard on smashes like 2012's "Diamonds" and 2011's "We Found Love." She hinted at this development on last year's one-off single "FourFiveSeconds," where she belted in a raw, raspy tone that expressed levels of soul her career to date had only implied. She follows through on that promise with stunners like the bluesy "Higher." When she sings, "This whiskey got me feelin' pretty," over dusty sampled strings from producer No I.D., she could be crooning in a Forties jazz club.

Rihanna serves up a one-two punch of left-field choices late in the album, giving doo-wop a modern spin on "Love on the Brain" and finding a new hypnotic pull in the Tame Impala tune "Same Ol' Mistakes," where her mellow vocals make the Australian psych-pop act's song worlds more inviting. At her core, though, she's still a hitmaker. "Work" isn't her best collaboration with Drake – that would be 2011's expansive house ballad "Take Care" – but it's an impeccably catchy glide across a subtle, syrupy dancehall beat. And the sexy synth-pop of "Desperado" could easily make it a club hit by summer.

Anti's vibed-out sound is more than just another new costume for an artist who's dabbled in everything from flirty teen pop to aggressive trap. After years as a singer largely defined by her production, it finally feels like Rihanna is in charge of her own sound, remaking pop on her own terms. As she puts it bluntly on the glitchy groove "Consideration," "I got to do things my own way, darling."

LISTEN NOW!
Hear key tracks from these albums at
RollingStone.com/albums.



Psych Rock's Mad Geniuses Tighten Up

Animal Collective strip away the reverb, hit the accelerator on a delightfully absurd LP

Animal Collective *Painting With Domino* ★★½



Avant-pop institution Animal Collective have specialized in ecstatic noise explorations for more than a decade. But their 10th album skips the signature escape-pod reverb washes, speeding up the tempos and shortening the song lengths to come up with the zippiest music they've ever made. Animal Collective's core trio recorded *Painting With* at an L.A. studio once frequented by the likes of Michael Jackson and the Beach Boys, and in a sense the music splits the difference between those poles. The intersecting harmonies of "FloriDada" suggest *Pet Sounds* sped up to Ramones velocity, and "Natural Selection" features electric viola from John Cale.

The music is as transporting as ever – AnCo's spastic group vocals remain a thing of nutrageous beauty. The songs just hit liftoff five times faster than ever before, driven hard by Panda Bear's cartoonishly expressive slapstick-EDM beats. The results are weirdly addictive. "Golden Gal" samples Bea Arthur from an old *Golden Girls* episode, and "Hocus Pocus" opens with a drive-time traffic reporter informing us we won't need to worry about seeing any dinosaurs during our morning commute. Good to know – in Animal Collective's reality, hitting a Piatnitzkysaurus out on the 405 feels totally plausible.

JON DOLAN



Savages

Adore Life Matador ★★½

Post-punk ranters from London with a heart of gold

With its raised-fist cover and its violent post-punk grind, you'd expect the second album from Savages to be an anti-everything screed. In reality, not so much: "Love is the answer," they advise, like flowers of romance in full bloom. Vocalist Jehnni Beth's affirming lyrics and torrid, imperious Siouxsie Sioux-style vocals elevate guitar atmospherics and forceful rhythms, giving songs like the bracing dance rocker "Evil" an open-armed grandeur. "I need to say I adore life!" Beth sings with glorious resolve against the eerie rumble of the title track. It's what Joy Division's Eighties might have sounded like if Ian Curtis had found the right antidepressants. **JON DOLAN**



Yoko Ono

Yes, I'm a Witch Too

Manimal Group ★★★

Yoko's thorny back catalog gets another set of radical remakes

Some artists are about the work, others about the ideas. John Cage tilted toward the latter, ditto his pal Yoko Ono. Among those ideas, 2007's *Yes, I'm a Witch* was a good one, with collaborators reimagining her back catalog. This sequel takes a similar approach, to mixed effect. Downside: "Walking on Thin Ice," where Danny Tenaglia replaces Ono's best-ever club groove with overripe strings. Upsides: Tune-Yards' five-alarm "Warrior Woman," Moby's ambient "Hell in Paradise." Everywhere, Ono's feminist, avant-garde spirit is a beacon, the sound of a good witch still making radical ideas seem possible, and fun. **WILL HERMES**

TOM ANDREW

Mavis Staples' New High Note

The singer belts out anthems for a new civil-rights crossroads

Mavis Staples

Livin' on a High Note Anti- ★★★★★



Pairing a veteran singer with next-generation material is a crapshoot. But after two Jeff Tweedy-produced LPs, Mavis Staples takes her comeback higher still here, using an A list of songwriters informed, not bound, by roots music. Valerie June, Ben Harper, Justin Vernon and Nick Cave all rise powerfully to the occasion. Credit the challenge of writing for an icon who addresses spiritual and political matters with scant abstraction: You step up, or step off.

Benjamin Booker's "Take Us Back" celebrates self via community, with Staples' startling flow somewhere between Millie Jackson and Kanye. Songs speak to #BlackLivesMatter in language echoing civil-rights-era anthems;



Neko Case's "History, Now" asks pointedly, "Do we go in like a surgeon? Do we go in like a bomb?" Producer M. Ward focuses on Staples' earthy, still-agile voice and pens two stand-outs: the dreamy gospel rocker "Don't Cry" and "MLK Song." The latter is a lean country blues, drawing words from a 1968 sermon of Dr. King, a man Staples can fairly call family. "In the march for peace," she testifies, "tell them I played the drum." She still does.

WILL HERMES



Lake Street Dive

Side Pony Nonesuch ★★★★★½

Retro-pop classicists bring the party, keep it hot

With this LP's title track, Lake Street Dive frontwoman Rachael Price coins a double-entendre for a down-low lover ("Who doesn't love a side pony?") in a magnificently husky alto – still the keystone of a band steeped in Motown soul, Beatles melodies and pop divas from Dusty Springfield to Adele. The retro vibe rules, vividly captured by producer Dave Cobb. If it feels a bit calculated, it's still pretty irresistible, and best when the crew disrupts the illusion of the 1960s, when few radio DJs would've dared play a song called "Hell Yeah," even if it was this good.

W.H.

CHRIS STRONG

59

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By Peter Travers

A Coen Comedy Classic

The Coen brothers take on Hollywood in a fizzy all-star farce anchored in – what else? – existential fear

Hail, Caesar!

George Clooney, Josh Brolin, Scarlett Johansson, Tilda Swinton, Channing Tatum

Directed by the Coen brothers

★★★★½

THE LAST THING A CRITIC expects at the start of a new year – the traditional burial ground for rotting digital corpses – is a major movie from major filmmakers. But that's what you get in *Hail, Caesar!*, a wild whoosh of Coen brothers wizardry that left me laughing helplessly and filled with spiritual dread. That's the Coens for you. Here, Ethan and Joel are messing with our heads more in the rat-a-tat style of *The Big Lebowski*, *Raising Arizona* and *Burn After Reading* than, say, *Fargo* or *Barton Fink*. But you'll still need to buckle up.

Hail, Caesar! is set in 1951 Hollywood, when studios turned out movies on an assembly line that sometimes, often accidentally, produced art. The irony is that making movies is often easier than keeping the talent in line. That task falls to Eddie Mannix (Josh Brolin), a studio fixer who can't let the gossips – the brilliant Tilda Swinton plays two of them – know which star is secretly cheating or pregnant or gay or crazy or a Commie bastard.

Hail, Caesar! is basically a day in the life of this studio cop, whose job is his religion. And Brolin, in a heart-and-soul per-



Clooney as a movie star resting on his laurels

formance, takes this crazy quilt of a movie about a man surrounded by nut jobs and plays it for real. He's just tremendous.

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned" are the first words we hear from Mannix, a married Catholic who exasperates his priest in confession by asking



Johansson plays an aquatic screen sensation in a water ballet that can't hide her secrets.

forgiveness on an almost daily basis. On his own, Eddie is an insecure mess. Prowling the studio, he's a scary lion.

He has to be. Working for Capitol Pictures makes this ex-bouncer an executive babysitter. And what babies. Scarlett Johansson is a treat as the

studio's swim-star sweetheart (think Esther Williams) with a mouth like a gun moll. Channing Tatum is a knockout as a song-and-dance man (think Gene Kelly) with a political agenda. Tatum so nails his joyous tap routine with a chorus of sailors that you long to see a musical built around him.

And cheers to the terrific Alden Ehrenreich as the studio's cowboy star (think Roy Rogers), a drawling rube who is forced to star as an urban sophisticate, a role for which he is unforgettably unsuited. It's howlingly funny to watch a vexed Brit director (a priceless Ralph Fiennes) guide him through countless takes of the line "would that it 'twere so simple." The scene is one for the comedy time capsule.

You don't really notice a plot until the studio's star of stars, Baird Whitlock (George Clooney), gets kidnapped during production of a biblical epic called *Hail, Caesar!* Clooney has a blast adding Whitlock to the series of idiots he's played for the Coens (*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, *Intolerable Cruelty*).

It's blasphemous fun watching him blow his lines in a cathartic scene with a crucified Christ.

Whitlock takes nothing seriously, not even being a hostage. That's why Mannix roughs him up hard. Trying to stay moral in this Hollywood Babylon, Mannix wrestles with a cosmic question: Should he put his faith in the God of Job or the unseen studio deity who phones in his commandments?

Mannix sweats it. Maybe the Coens do too. But their film never loses its exhilarating buoyancy. The Coens love these debauched children and the genre films they turn out with such batshit glee. Cinematographer Roger Deakins, production designer Jess Gonchor and costume designer Mary Zophres create visual bliss. *Hail, Caesar!* is a valentine to on-the-fly filmmaking, from two control freaks. And everything, nihilistic despair included, works like a charm. It's not easy to whip up a fizzy throwaway that's also a serious pleasure. Would that it 'twere so simple. Yet the Coens pull it off in style. They're indispensable. 

So Hot Right Now

Zoolander No. 2

Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson

Directed by Ben Stiller

★ ★ ½

IT'S BEEN 15 YEARS SINCE Ben Stiller built his comic monument to narcissism in *Zoolander*. Based on the blazing stupidity of male models in Manhattan, the movie opened two weeks after 9/11, not a good time for dumb jokes. Sensitivities were so high that the World Trade Center had to be digitally removed from release prints. Box office was tepid. But then came cable, DVD and streaming, giving the film a runway to the mainstream. Over the years, Stiller's Derek Zoolander found audiences sucking in their cheeks and copying his patented looks – Blue Steel and Magnum. As star, director and

co-writer, Stiller was hounded on social media for a follow-up.

Now it's here. "They want a sequel until they get one," Stiller recently joked. Expectations can be a bitch. But *Zoolander No. 2* sweats its silly ass off to please. The results are scatter-shot. But when it works – oh, baby. There's a bit with Justin Bieber and a selfie that, well, no spoilers.

There are megastar cameos, from Cumberbatch to Kanye and Kim. But the focus is on Derek, now a virtual recluse since the casualty-ridden collapse of the center he built for Kids Who Can't Read Good and Who Wanna Learn to Do Other Stuff Good Too. Enter Hansel (Owen Wilson), also in hiding

Stiller and Wilson step into fashion.

with his traveling orgy. Now forgotten, Derek and Hansel must reassert their relevance in fashion while helping an Interpol agent (Penélope Cruz) track down a Rome-based organization hellbent on murdering celebrities and creating a new Fountain of Youth.



Or at least I think that's what it's about. Derek also has a plus-size son (Cyrus Arnold) who may be the Chosen One. For me, *Zoolander No. 2* is all about watching Derek and Hansel mix it up with returning villain Mugatu (Will Ferrell, so hot right now and forever) and his lady love, a floaty orange blob of botched facial surgery played by an unrecognizable but über-funny Kristen Wiig.

I've said too much as it is. A who's who of fashion show up, and I'm not kidding. The movie is always kidding, which is its loopy, lunatic charm. In the spirit of his best work as a filmmaker, *Tropic Thunder*, Stiller throws everything he can to induce hysteria. Even when he misses the mark, you applaud his effort. Insert Magnum face here. 

Screw Oscar – Sundance Votes Color

Welcome to diversity in the snow as this Utah festival honors inclusive filmmaking

The New Sundance Kid

THAT WOULD BE NATE PARKER, 36, who scored a double hit with *The Birth of a Nation*. Parker won both the Audience Award and the Jury Prize for writing and directing a passion project in which he stars as Nat Turner, the black preacher who, in 1831, led the bloodiest slave revolt in U.S. history. Daringly co-opting the title of the century-old D.W. Griffith film that made heroes of the Ku Klux Klan, Parker turns the tables with a vengeance. Controversy will follow, as it always does when a director touches a raw nerve. Parker's movie is a milestone, and not just because it



Parker in *The Birth of a Nation*

sold for a record \$17.5 million and added to the Academy's public shaming (#OscarsSoWhite), but because of Parker's ardor and artistry in making his film an agent for change that will stand the test of time.

More Winners

DIRECTOR CHAD HARTIGAN won a screenwriting prize for the funny and touching *Morris From America*, about a 13-year-old (Markees Christmas) and his widower dad (Craig Robin-

son) who find themselves the only black faces in Heidelberg, Germany. And Roger Ross Williams took directing honors for the indelibly moving doc *Life, Animated*, about a boy who pushed through the barriers of autism by obsessing over Disney's animated classics.

Best of the Rest

EVERYTHING ABOUT KENNETH Lonergan's *Manchester by the Sea*, with a superb Casey Affleck as a tormented Boston handyman, is damn near perfect. As is James Schamus' take on Philip Roth's *Indignation*, with a terrific Logan Lerman as a Jewish kid at a Christian college to dodge the Korean War. Note to the Obamas: See Richard Tanne's *Southside With You*, in which Parker Sawyers and Tika Sumpter re-create your sweet, soulful first date. 



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[Cont. from 41] Every morning, he would stare at the clouds as they shifted and changed colors, and he felt like he'd never seen anything more spectacular.

Then he made *Birdman* and with it made a huge tonal leap. As in all of Iñárritu's films, the main character, the actor Riggan Thomson (Michael Keaton), takes a merciless beating – pretty much everything that can go wrong for him over the course of the film's two hours does. The difference here is that Iñárritu seems to have realized that when you inflict a series of punishments on a character, it can be *King Lear* if played one way, but played another, it's Charlie Chaplin. *Birdman* is very funny – at times slapstick, even. Coming from Iñárritu, this feels like a radical act.

He admits as much. His love of dark movies and books comes from his mother. "Sad music, I always thought, is more beautiful than other music," he says. "But at the same time, I am in my personal life a very happy guy. I have a sense of humor. I am not the kind of depressed guy all the time brooding. No. I am very enthusiastic about things. And that's why, for me, *Birdman* was so liberating, to be able to laugh about tragedy." He smiles. "Because then it can be even more sad, in a good way."

A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH HANGS on the wall of Iñárritu's Santa Monica office: a man, his back to the camera, sits alone amid a spectacular wintry landscape. Mountains loom on the horizon, and there are no traces of civilization. The solitude plays as epic, an existential provocation. But there's something inherently comic about the man's isolation: how puny he looks, the incongruity of his presence in such untouched natural surroundings, that puffy parka. It's a selfie stick away from a *New Yorker* cartoon-captioning contest.

Iñárritu's assistant snapped the photo on her phone during the shooting of *The Revenant* and later gave it to him as a present. "Is that me?" Iñárritu asked. It was! He was taking a lunch break. "I like that picture," he says, chuckling. "It represents the feeling of directing this film."

Shooting on location in remotest Canada, in subzero temperatures, is a difficult enough undertaking. But Iñárritu and his brilliant cinematographer, Emmanuel Lubezki, had decided they would only film in natural light, which meant they had about 90 minutes each day where things would look just right.

"It was insane," Iñárritu says. There's a hint of pride in his voice, at having survived something so reckless, the same way a certain type of sober person can almost sound like they're bragging when telling tales of past self-abuse. "I would say the film is a happy accident of a very bad decision," he continues. "It's the result of an

irresponsible decision that I made. But we need that sometimes – to be naive, blind from reality. If not, we will not embark ourselves on things. I'll be an office guy or whatever. I mean, I'm not an idiot – I knew how difficult it would be. But I can feel now how far I was from reality when I was deciding how this was to be made. I'm glad that I did that irresponsible decision, but it could have been really bad. You know what I mean? Like when you climb Mount Everest and nobody dies, but we were so close! It's that feeling of relief."

"I've been in a lot of ambitious projects – *Titanic* was certainly one of them – but this seemed absolutely bizarre, and like a crazy adventure to be a part of," DiCaprio says, adding with a laugh, "In a lot of ways, I think Alejandro was looking for a *Fitzcarraldo* experience." He's referring to the notoriously arduous 1982 feature by Werner Herzog, filmed mostly in the Amazon rainforest, a shoot so insane it became the subject of its own documentary. "He wanted to go into the heart of darkness," DiCaprio says, "and not only film nature, but really immerse himself in a completely transformative experience."

Shooting began in October 2014 in Alberta, in wilderness so deep it required commuting two hours each way from Calgary. Soon, costs ballooned. Snow had a way of melting, or not accumulating fast enough, interrupting the shoot. More snow had to be trucked in. There was flooding. For one scene, Iñárritu demanded the triggering of an actual avalanche. The filming had been scheduled to wrap last spring, but it stretched on until the end of summer. At the Oscars, in February, Iñárritu may have triumphed with *Birdman*. "But at the ceremony, I was receiving texts that the location is fucking flooded," Iñárritu recalls. "I was having a photo with my Oscar and being like, 'Fuck!' I was shooting 36 hours later."

Industry rumblings became so intense that the producers, in damage control, took the rare step of making Iñárritu available for an interview in *The Hollywood Reporter* before filming had even been completed. The headline, nonetheless, was HOW LEONARDO DICAPRIO'S 'THE REVENANT' SHOOT BECAME 'A LIVING HELL,' and the story was replete with tales of staffers being fired or quitting, of Iñárritu allegedly barring one of the producers from the set. Unnamed "veteran crew members" claimed that "making the film has been by far the worst experience of their careers."

While he feels vindicated by the film's reception, Iñárritu still bristles at early characterizations of his shoot as a modern-day *Apocalypse Now*. "Everybody that embarked on this film knew the conditions," he insists. "Nobody was lied. Some of them complained. I understand. For all of us it was hard. But guess what: 99.9 percent of the people stayed, and we are so proud. To cover this gossip – like, 'Oh,

somebody was fired.' Well, there is 300 people in the company! Of course some people were fired. And some people stay and love it. Is that really something should be even discussed? I don't think so. But anyway, now the film is there, and now the people understand that every penny, every decision that was made, was worth it."

"Human nature usually applies to filmmaking," Sean Penn says. "People get tired and lazy, and they start accepting things. But Alejandro never lets himself go there. He's got more warrior spirit than that. Too many of my colleagues, actors and directors, like to put on a nice suit or dress and represent the picture more than make it."

Iñárritu appeared on a panel recently with the director Ridley Scott, who talked about shooting *Gladiator* five minutes from the airport in London. "And he looked at me," Iñárritu recalls, "and said, in an ironic and humorous way, 'You don't have to go places to make the film look like they are in those places.' And I absolutely disagree. Because it shows. People are very surprised when they see the film. 'Oh, my God! The landscape, the light!' And I said, 'That's available. I didn't create it! I just captured it.' And how I did it? I just put a fucking camera down and I stayed 11 months freezing my ass to capture that fucking thing. I didn't invade the fucking screen with pixels and electronics."

Among this year's now-infamously-white list of Oscar contenders, Iñárritu was the only person of color to be nominated in any of the major categories. The nominations had yet to be announced when we talked, but Iñárritu did bring up questions of representation in Hollywood, mentioning that he enjoyed the complexity and nuance of *Sicario* and *Narcos* and lamenting the "clichéd stereotypes of fat, bad, drunk Mexicans that are so common in mainstream American films sometimes." Iñárritu being Iñárritu, he pays particular attention to musical slights. "I love Sam Mendes, but I went to see *Spectre* with my kid, and the opening scene of the *Diá de Muertos* party, with this kind of tropical music, in downtown Mexico City, with all these people dancing like it's the Rio de Janeiro carnival... I had to laugh. Or when I was releasing *Amores Perros* on DVD here, the music over the menu was flamenco! I said, 'Guys, this is from Andalucía, from the south of Spain. This is not Mexican music.' 'Oh, but it's so Latin.' I said, 'Latin' is a fuck you! Like if I say, 'It's so Anglo,' and just play some German music."

Iñárritu has been most dismayed by the rise of Donald Trump, and the ways in which, despite his racism, he's been treated as an entertainment figure on shows like *Saturday Night Live*. "He's a very poor man who only possesses money," Iñárritu says, adding that he takes solace in one certainty: "Trump doesn't know it yet, but he will become one of the guys that he hates very soon. Soon he will be a loser." 

[*Cont. from 37*] really real.” But again, he says, “This conversation feels more relevant, like, two years ago. I get it, I haven’t really spoken about it – I just don’t want to be disrespectful to anyone’s new relationships. I’ve lived a lot of life since then.”

For example: Jennifer Lawrence. Martin and Lawrence reportedly dated off and on for much of last year. Martin won’t discuss this or any of the other supposed women in his life, except to say that “if I was in another relationship – which I’m not confirming or denying – it might have been with someone really wonderful and great and amazing. This is, of course, speculative,” he adds for emphasis. “You couldn’t put it on a gossip site. I’m just telling you.”

As a very famous, yet also extremely private, singer-songwriter, Martin is in a funny spot. It’s inevitable that people will parse his songs for clues to his love life. Lyrics like “You make me feel like I’m alive again” on “Adventures of a Lifetime” have prompted rumors that it’s about Lawrence. Martin says he won’t dissect his songs, because he wants them to be “whatever someone wants them to be.” “But all that speculation,” he allows, “probably some of it is right. If there’s a song about an amazing person making you feel great, you’re probably not a million miles off.”

As if that all weren’t inclusive enough, the new album also includes backing vocals by Martin’s current reported girlfriend, an English actress named Anna-belle Wallis. Martin, of course, is mum. “Just because someone’s singing on our album doesn’t mean we’re married,” he says, slightly bristly. Which is totally fair. But I’m a little surprised that he would even have her on the album. Isn’t he just inviting questions he doesn’t want to answer?

At this point, Martin seems to reach the limit of discussing his relationships. “Well, maybe I fucked up,” Martin says. “What should I have done? Should we change all the songs?” I apologize, tell him I just find it curious. “No, it’s cool, man,” he says. “I’m interested in this as well. If your life is a bit public... but you release music that’s very personal... but you don’t want your personal life to be public...” He laughs. “It’s like, ‘What are you doing here, son?’”

For a man who spent 10 years in a high-profile marriage, Martin has actually done an impressive job of flying below the radar tabloidwise. “I’ve only been in, like, two relationships – or two and a half,” he says. “And it was never my decision to make it public.” He best summed up his thinking in a 2011 Howard Stern interview, when he explained why he walks red carpets with his band but not Paltrow: “Our band is selling something... [Gwyneth and I] don’t have anything to sell.”

Which is noble and undoubtedly true. But if you’re looking for privacy, there

must be better ways to go about it than dating the most popular actress in the country.

“Is this all just a secret ploy to get me to join Tinder?” Martin asks, laughing. “I see where you’re going with this. But that’s to deny the reality of who you meet. A lot of people who are accountants go out with other people in finance.” And besides, he says, you can’t choose who you fall for. “That’s the crux of it, isn’t it?” he says, then smiles. “Let me delightfully quote Selena Gomez and say, ‘The heart wants what it wants,’ my brother.”

BY NOW APPLE’S CLASS IS ENDING, so we head back so Martin can take her to her dance class a few miles away. In between, we have some time to kill, so we grab Thai food at a health-food cafe while Apple sits at the next table doing homework on her iPad. Martin requests that any more details about her stay off the record. But he probably wouldn’t

Coming off tour was tough for Martin: “You’ve got two years of being needed every night, and then it’s gone.”

mind it being said how fiercely and openly he adores her.

Both of Martin’s kids are now at an age when they’ve begun to ask serious questions about the world. “Yesterday, Moses asked me, ‘What’s the Holocaust?’” Martin says. “I felt happy he hadn’t experienced that [word], but bummed out to have to tell him.” But they’re also at an age when he can do fun stuff with them. Like two nights ago, he took Moses to a Lakers-Warriors game – courtside seats. “I’d never been to a Lakers game before,” he says. “Talk about feeling grateful. My son loves Steph Curry, and he was right there.” Jack Nicholson was also there, two seats away, separated only by a young woman. “I don’t know if she was with Moses or Jack,” Martin jokes. (Turns out it was Nicholson’s daughter.)

In an especially gratifying development for Martin, he and the kids are also starting to make music together. Apple is learning to play guitar, and both sing on the new album. Sometimes they do silly projects at home, like using headphones to create their own silent disco, or recording their own creepy soundtrack for a Halloween maze they built. “We pitch-shifted the kids’ vocals to make them sound really weird,” Martin says. “It was scary!” He’s impressed by their lack of tribalism

when it comes to music, and loves that they’re turning him on to stuff – like Silentó’s “Watch Me (Whip/Nae Nae).” “I’m not sure I can whip, but I can nae nae with the best of them,” Martin says. They’re even inspiring him to make his own music better. “Part of me wants to make sure the band is good, just so they’re not embarrassed at school,” he says. “I mean, really. Seriously.”

For most of their existence, Coldplay have been a band that it’s OK to make fun of – encouraged, even. It used to hurt Martin, a lot. “I had a couple of years in the mid-2000s where it was really confusing to me,” he says. “I was like, ‘Why is our band sometimes a punchline?’” Even in December, when the NFL announced they’d be performing at the Super Bowl, the Internet lit up with jokes about half-time naps.

Martin gets it. “We’re an easy target,” he says. “Just look at some of the stuff I’ve been saying to you. Anyone who says, ‘Hey, why don’t we just love each other and get along...’ That’s easy to slag off.” He says he used to have very binary thoughts about the band: “I felt like either everyone likes us or everyone hates us.” But now, “We’re gonna do our thing,” he says. “If you like it, wonderful, and if you don’t, I really don’t mind. There’s so many other things you can do. You can have a PlayStation!”

His bandmates have noticed it too. “His armor is a lot thicker in a way,” Champion says. “I think he’d be the first to admit he’s worked quite hard on that.”

“He deals with bad things better than ever,” agrees Buckland. “When he was younger, he was highly strung and intense – but I think when you go through some stuff that destroys you, it makes you better as a person.”

Now, “he’s just like, ‘Fuck it. This is where I am,’” says Harvey. “I think over the course of 16 years, he’s released himself from the shackles of worrying what people are going to say.”

For the moment, all of his anxious energy is directed only toward Super Bowl Sunday. “Right now, I’m thinking about 12 and a half minutes in February,” he says. “To me, that’s the climax of everything.” Beyoncé will be joining them, reportedly along with Bruno Mars. The plan is to have them both onstage for about four minutes, with the band playing alone for the rest.

Last night, Martin ran through the Coldplay part of the set for one of their special guests. “And at the end of it,” he says, “they said – in sort of a surprised way – ‘Oh. You’ve got good songs.’ I was like, ‘Thank goodness!’” he says, cracking up. “Bruce [Springsteen] is up to four hours, and we’re pushing the 10-minute mark. So say what you like about Coldplay. But after 15 years, we have eight and a half minutes that some people might agree is OK.”

Kid Rock

An American badass on becoming a grandfather, buying a plane, and what he learned from Seger

You recently became a grandfather, at the age of 43. How did you feel about that milestone?

Well, it keeps my redneck street cred in good standing, right? Maybe even my hip-hop street cred, if I have any of that left. I'm enjoying it. Listen, my son graduated college and he has a job. That alone, as a parent, is such a relief. I can't imagine what the fuck I put my parents through. Now I have a beautiful granddaughter, on top of it? It's pretty crazy. My friends say, "How lucky are you, to be able to see your granddaughter do so much stuff? You'll be at her wedding." So many things you might not see if you have kids later in life, which seems to be the trend now for most responsible adults.

What's the most Detroit thing about you?

Maybe my work ethic. Knowing how to get back up when being kicked down. I went through a lot of that in my history. Everything that I went through to get the success I have, I think a lot of that has to do with Detroit.

You also have places in Alabama, Malibu, Nashville and Florida. What's that about?

People write about my house in Malibu: "No one would ever expect him to have this." But I also have double-wide trailers in Nashville and Alabama, and a beach house in Florida with pink shag carpeting. I like going in and out of different cultures, just like in my music. I go to Alabama to hunt and hang out. It's such a simple way of life. You're just in the middle of nowhere. I see these celebrities bitching about "Oh, these people won't leave me alone!" There ain't a fuckin' soul in Alabama that's going to fuck with you.

What was your most decadent purchase?

I bought a pretty expensive 1930 Cadillac. It's concord-yellow, a fuckin' high-dollar car. But at the same time, it's probably going to end up being better than putting that money in the bank. And I guess an airplane is pretty decadent, right? [Laughs] But if anyone has a problem with that, tell them to go fuck themselves, because I will live in that trailer in Alabama before I give up that fuckin' airplane. That airplane is, hands down, the greatest luxury a human being could have. There's nothing that fucking beats it. Fuck a yacht.

Who are your heroes?

Jesus. George Washington. And anybody that's had the balls to go and fight

for this country. And hardworking people that come from not having a lot, that keep a strong family and pull themselves up from their bootstraps and make something of themselves in life, you know? Those are heroes to me.

What are the most important rules you live by?

Don't be a dick. I try to be cool with everybody. Even if it's somebody where you don't really appreciate what they do, like if it's a band whose music you don't like. I think I got all of that out of my system when I was young anyway. I walked around flipping everyone off, telling them to go fuck themselves. Also, don't hang out with assholes. If you surround yourself with good people, everything else is going to work itself out.

You were close friends with the late music-biz legend Ahmet Ertegun. What did you learn from him?

I learned a lot about having class. How to speak to a lady, and kiss her on both cheeks, and that there's a time to say "Fuck you" and "Suck my dick," and then there's a time when it's not appropriate. Because Ahmet and I would be as dirty as we'd want to be, and have as much fun on any level as you could think of, as old as he was. But then we'd have dignitaries with us, and he would be like, "Hey, none of that shit at the dinner table tonight, all right? Follow my lead!"

And what do you take away from your friendship with Bob Seger?

One of the biggest things is how to grow old gracefully in this business.

You see so many people that don't.

He's comfortable in his own skin.

He's made his mark on the business and he's happy with his success.

You see these other aging rockers, and they still gotta be in the limelight all the time.

They wanna walk in and create a scene, and it takes them three hours to get ready to leave the house.

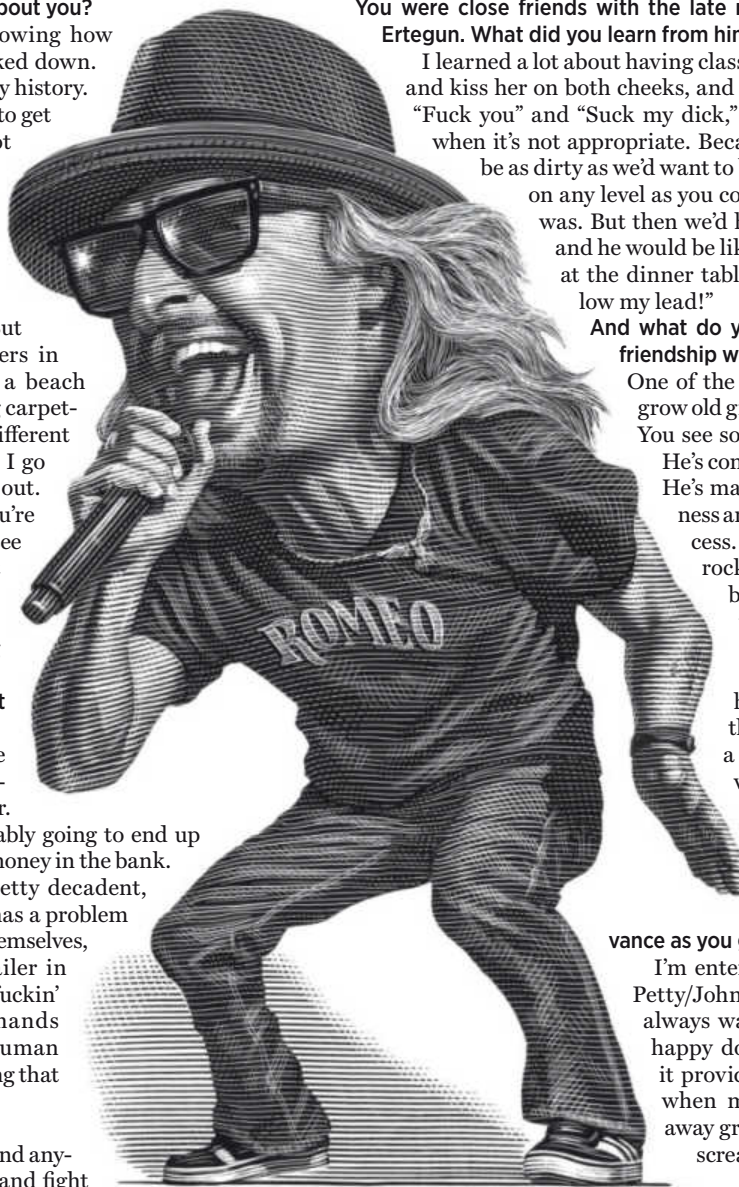
That seems like a nightmare to me. So when I look at Bob Seger,

I'm like, "That's the person I'd like to follow in this journey."

So you don't want to be fighting for relevance as you get older?

I'm entering the Bob Seger/Tom Petty/John Mellencamp phase. I'll always want to do music, but I'm happy doing it at whatever level it provides me. I've always said, when my time is done, I'll go away gracefully. I won't kick and scream; I won't put up a fight.

INTERVIEW BY BRIAN HIATT



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